The Washington Monthly

OCTOBER 1995 $3.95 ($4.95 CAN)

MARLIN FITZWATER DESCRIBES HIS BAD DAY

■

WASHINGTON WIVES

■

PLUS: CHARLES PETERS ON IRVING KRISTOL AND JOSEPH NOCERA ON WARREN BUFFETT

PAUL KRUGMAN

There are three things you can count on in modern America: The rich keep getting richer. The poor keep getting poorer. And Republicans keep lying about it.

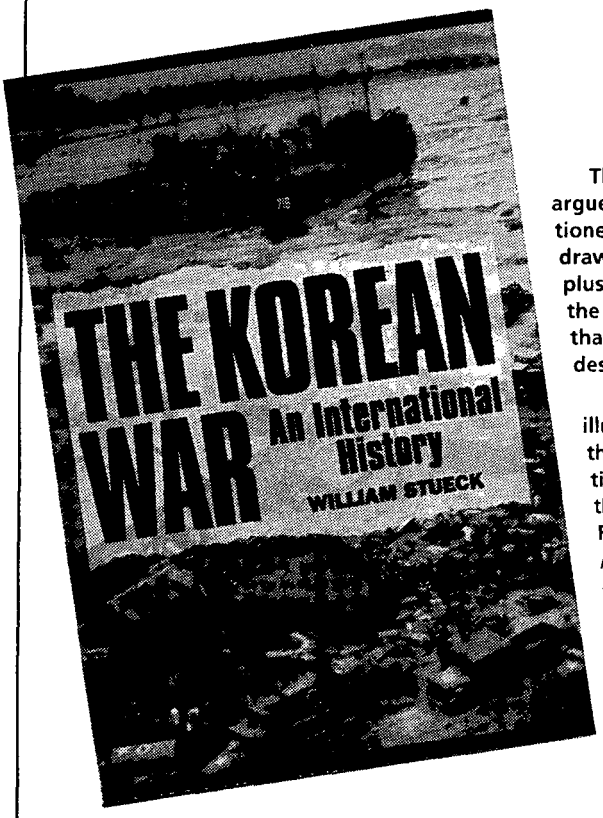
WARNING: Drug use can be hazardous to your health. But prohibition causes a black market with severe side-effects, including violence, crime, and the seduction of kids into the drug trade. **Why you can hate drugs and still want to legalize them.** By Joshua Wolf Shenk

TAYLOR BRANCH

Race, repentance, and the roots of scapegoating "big government"—How George Wallace, a Southern Democrat, fathered the modern GOP.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rethinking History



The Korean War
An International History
WILLIAM STUECK

This first truly international history of the Korean War argues that by its timing, its course, and its outcome it functioned as a substitute for World War III. William Stueck draws on recently available materials from seven countries, plus the archives of the United Nations. While conceding the tragic and brutal nature of the war, Stueck suggests that it helped to prevent the occurrence of an even more destructive conflict in Europe.

"William Stueck has given us a comprehensive and illuminating analysis and review of the Korean War—the war that in many ways defined the future of international relations, and in particular the American role in those relations."—The Honorable Paul H. Nitze, Former Arms Control Negotiator

Princeton Studies in International History and Politics
John Lewis Gaddis, Jack L. Snyder, and Richard H. Ullman, Editors
Cloth: $35.00 ISBN 0-691-03767-1

The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War
Executive and Legislative Roles and Relationships
Part IV: July 1965—January 1968
WILLIAM CONRAD GIBBONS

This fourth volume of a five-part policy history of the U.S. government and the Vietnam War covers the core period of U.S. involvement, from July 1965, when the decision was made to send large-scale U.S. forces, to the beginning of 1968, just before the Tet offensive and the decision to seek a negotiated settlement. Using a wide variety of archival sources and interviews, the book examines in detail the decisions of the president, relations between the president and Congress, and the growth of public and congressional opposition to the war.

Paper: $24.95 ISBN 0-691-00635-0 Cloth: $79.50 ISBN 0-691-00636-9

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOKSTORES OR DIRECTLY FROM THE PUBLISHER: 800-777-4726
WORLD WIDE WEB SITE: HTTP: //AAUP.PUPRESS.PRINCETON.EDU/PUPRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Volume 27, Number Ten October 1995

The Washington Monthly

4 Tilting at Windmills *by Charles Peters*
Gingrich's broken promises ... the fine print of lobbying reform ... legal aid for the czar's daughter ... the story *The New Yorker* missed ... and other odds and ends....

8 "What the Public Doesn't Know Can't Hurt Us" *by Paul Krugman*
There are three things in modern America you can count on: The rich get richer. The poor get poorer. And conservatives lie about it.

15 The Wild West Wing *by Marlin Fitzwater*
One day's shootout in the press briefing corral.

20 The Not So Merry Wives of Washington *by Juliet Eilperin*
It's as hard as ever to escape the "wife of" label.

24 Give Them Liberty to Give Us Death? *by J.M. Balkin*
We've come a long way from the founding fathers, baby, when cigarette companies try to pervert the First Amendment to protect seductive advertising.

26 How the GOP Learned to Love the Bomb *by Amanda Bichsel*
The Republicans aren't worried about nuclear terrorism. But you should be.

32 Why You Can Hate Drugs and Still Want to Legalize Them *by Joshua Wolf Shenk*
We can't give up fighting abuse and addiction. But prohibition does far more harm than good.

42 Student Loans: The Wrong Cuts *by Jonathan Cohn*
With this vital program, Republicans appear to prefer a wasteful monopoly to effective competition.

ON POLITICAL BOOKS

48 The Democratic Father of Modern Republicanism *by Taylor Branch*
George Wallace: Racism, repentance, and the roots of scapegoating "big government."

52 Irving Kristol's Life—and Mine *by Charles Peters*
Beyond a dislike for mushy liberalism, our experiences have taken us in different directions.

55 Master of the Game *by Joseph Nocera*
$10.7 billion and counting: The life and times of the greatest investor in history

57 Political Booknotes *Reviews by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Jonathan Rowe, and Chandler Burr*

DEPARTMENTS

2 Letters
12 Monthly Journalism Award
14 Tidbits and Outrages
30 Who's Who
41 Memo of the Month
46 Political Puzzle

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters

Union Blues

In "The Case for Unions" (July/August), Sean Reilly justifiably laments the decline of workers unions. Even more disturbing than the 140-to-1 ratio of average CEO salaries to those of workers has been the arbitrary mass lay-offs at major companies, with the job duties of those fired often contracted out at half the cost.

This practice destroys the very fiber of our society by fashioning a two-tier work force: one near the poverty level, the other rich or super-rich, a scenario not compatible with democracy.

Nelson Marans
Silver Spring, MD

Red Faces

Your recent article on unions referred to the "backbone of the blue-collar work force—men with a high school degree or less." Why did you refer only to men? Women have worked in factories for a very long time—I think back to the immigrant girls in the New England factories of the 1800s. Since women are paid less than men, our wages must be falling, too. Let's not pit men against women—or make women invisible in the work force.

Bettijane Burger
Charleston, WV

Angry White Men

Sean Reilly's article on labor unions made many valid points but failed to elaborate on an important issue. A renaissance of unionism at this point in our country would not only be just, but beneficial. The current phenomenon of the "angry white male" runs parallel to the suppression of wages, the vanishing manufacturing base, and the diminished power of labor unions.

I wept when I watched the tragedy in Oklahoma. Anger and bitterness left unchecked will surface eventually, sometimes in devastating ways. We have a growing sector of society that is willing to work but bounces from chronically unemployed to underemployed. One wonders how many more Timothy McVeighs are driving around the country in their rusting cars feeling victimized. Could the dignity of secure work at a decent rate of pay have avoided the Oklahoma bombing?

Perhaps we need to ask ourselves whether we prefer that these people seek strength and representation from a labor union, or from a Ryder truck full of explosives.

Kimberly A. Shanahan
San Francisco, CA

Union Fat Cat?

I was heartened to see the prominent placement of a pro-union story on your July/August cover. But I was equally disheartened to see some troubling mistakes in the section regarding the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen.

The article states that I spent one-third of $2 million, or approximately $650,000, in transportation funds on private jet charters. The actual amount was $243,000, which involved a hefty travel schedule of 177 nights on the road. The subsequent references to charter air costs for a doctor's appointment and a personal visit in Nuremberg are simply wrong, as well. These trips were for a medical emergency and refueling, respectively. The final reference to travel "around Europe for a month" involved seven official trips that included numerous officials from other labor unions and organizations, all of whom were invoiced for their share. As with many other cases, the charter air service was more economical and practical. The erroneous information bears an uncanny resemblance to highly biased campaign rhetoric being distributed by my challenger in the union's upcoming election this October, outgoing Secretary-Treasurer Gerald Carlisle.

We clearly agree that unions need reinvigoration, and BAC has been working hard to transform itself: to run more economically and yet more effectively, and to energize the membership to both desire and achieve active participation in their political and social environments. The goal here is more democratic participation by union members. That makes it all the more ironic to be in your article as an example of union "fat cats" isolated from their members.

John T. Joyce
President, International Union of Bricklayers & Allied Craftsmen

The editors reply: We had received the information about John Joyce's travel habits from what we considered a reliable source. When Joyce questioned our facts, we checked with our source, and discovered that the material had been disseminated originally by Gerald Carlisle. The Carlisle campaign provided us with documentation of their claims, we verified the facts, and we stand by our story—with one exception: the amount Joyce billed to the union for jet travel.

According to Gary Witlen, the assistant general counsel for the Machinists' Union and a representative of Carlisle's, the figure of $650,000 came from jet travel billed to various union affiliates that are also funded by union dues. He promised to provide us with documentation demonstrating this.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It never arrived. He stopped returning our phone calls and then claimed that he never promised to provide this documentation. This is disturbing, and it means that we can only assume that $243,000 was indeed the amount Joyce billed directly to the union.

But we are also disturbed by the fact that John Joyce sees $243,000 spent on jet travel—remember, that doesn't include the costs of hotels or other travel expenses—for himself alone as perfectly acceptable. To us, that figure seems proof of the point we were trying to make: That union officials have lost touch with their membership because they too often feel entitled to the lifestyle of a corporate CEO.

Dreaming of Jackson Hole

Joshua Wolf Shenk's article on lottery advertising ("Everyone's A Loser," July/August) rests largely on the premise that the poor are too gullible or depraved to know what's good for them. He points out that lottery ticket buyers predominantly consist of the working class, "postal workers and retirees on Social Security," not the affluent. But this just proves that buying lottery tickets makes sense only for the poor. Why should young professionals buy many lottery tickets, when mutual funds offer such an attractive vehicle for their long-term investment?

On the other hand, if you don't earn much, putting a few dollars a day in a savings account won't get you very far. Suppose, for example, that you're an aging blue-collar worker whose dream is to retire comfortably on a ranch in Jackson Hole. You can put $50 a week into a savings account, and, if your creditors don't get the money first, you should be able to afford something quite nice by about age 100. At least with a lottery ticket you've got a chance of wealth in your lifetime.

Sure, using deceptive ads or targeting ads at the 5 percent of the population that's "susceptible to compulsive gambling," whatever that means, is out of line. But as long as some people in our society have no realistic chance of becoming wealthy by just working hard and saving, there will be people with reason to buy lottery tickets.

Advertising that points out the advantages of a lottery to the poor is no worse (or better) than any other advertising aimed at people who may want to buy a particular luxury.

John Bohn
Washington, D.C.

Misdiagnosed

In your July/August issue, you bemoan the proposed elimination of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research ("Tilting at Windmills"). Learning from your magazine that the agency compares competing medical treatments, I called for a list of publications. This is what I learned: There is no list of publications, but they are working on one—this statement came from an agency that has been in existence for five years and has an annual budget of $162 million. The woman on the phone offered to list for me the 16 "guidelines" from which I could choose. When I asked what she meant by a "guideline," she didn't know. When I said that she must have a list of guidelines and could I have that, she said she had memorized them and had nothing on paper. When I asked for general information about the agency, I was told there was nothing available. Please tell me again why this agency shouldn't be eliminated?

Dana Isherwood
Orinda, CA

The editor replies: We phoned the agency's communications office and discovered that they do have a list of guidelines and a list of publications, both of which seem genuinely helpful to those seeking health care guidance. Trouble is, their phone operators don't seem to know this, as we discovered when we called the agency anonymously. We still think the agency performs a valuable service—but you're right, to justify taxpayer funding, they need to make sure the public can reap the benefits.

The Washington Monthly

Editor in Chief Charles Peters
Publisher Casandra Tate
Editors Gareth Cook, Daniel Franklin, Joshua Wolf Shenk, Amy Waldman
Contributing Editors
Jonathan Alter, Thomas N. Bethell, Tom Bethell, Taylor Branch, Matthew Cooper, Gregg Easterbrook, James Fallows, Christopher Georges, Paul Glastris, Mickey Kaus, Phil Keisling, Michael Kinsley, Nicholas Lemann, Suzannah Lessard, Arthur Levine, Jon Meacham, Joseph Nocera, Leonard Reed, John Rothchild, Jonathan Rowe, David Segal, Walter Shapiro, Scott Shuger, Steven Waldman
Editorial Advisory Board
Charles W. Bailey, James David Barber, Edgar Cahn, David Halberstam, Murray Kempton, Richard Reeves, Hugh Sidey
Assistant to the Editor Peggy Stark
Business Manager Rebecca Gray
Production Manager David J. Linker
Intern Jennifer Shecter
Proofers Carousel Bayrd, Amanda Bichsel, Rebecca Bunn, T. King Carvell, Alan Greenblatt, Sunil Iyengar, Jamie Peacock, Rachel Schwartz, Reneé Swanson, Scott Walter

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $39.50; two years, $74; three years, $105. For Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add $7 for surface delivery; air mail delivery add $32. Back issues, $5.00. Send correspondence concerning subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of address to Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. For change of address, please provide six weeks' notice and include old address label. *The Washington Monthly* is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, the Social Science Index, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. For reprint rights for all or part of an article call David Linker at (202) 462-0128. Published monthly except combined January/February and July/August issues by The Washington Monthly Company, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 462-0128. Printed in U.S.A.

© 1995 The Washington Monthly Co. All rights reserved. Reproduction by any method whatsoever without permission is prohibited.

ISSN 0043-0633. Postmaster: Send change of address to *The Washington Monthly*, Box 587, Mount Morris IL, 61054. Second class postage paid at Mechanicsburg, PA. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tilting at Windmills

On the first Monday Night Football of the new season, Dan Dierdorf said, "The great ones will cheat and fudge." What an inspiring message for American youth....

"When senators who have fought against tougher lobbying rules since 1948 suddenly turn around and vote 98-0 in favor of reform," writes Knight-Ridder's Frank Greve, "it's time to read the fine print."

Here's what the fine print reveals: Although the bill limits lobbyists' gifts to legislators to $50, including meals and junkets, for a six-month period, there are 23 exceptions and no penalties, and—get this—disclosure is voluntary....

The PX is the department store of the armed forces. The letters stand for Post Exchange, which reflects the institution's original purpose—to supply provisions for the families of military personnel stationed at remote outposts with no town or shopping facilities nearby.

But since the disappearance of the frontier a century ago, the need for the PX has become less obvious. They and their discounted prices continued to be justified, however, on the basis that the military was underpaid. In 1940, for example, a private received $21 a month. Even at the end of World War II, he got only $50. But in the last three decades military pay has, when benefits are factored in, become quite comparable to or in many cases better than that earned by civilians. Furthermore, there are now civilian stores that offer discount prices all over the place.

So why do we spend $1.85 billion subsidizing the PXs and the commissaries (the military's supermarkets)? Especially when the subsidy goes not to provide essentials to some lonely outpost but the perfume and gold jewelry by Dior, the Lenox china, and the Burberry ties, that *The Washington Post* reports are on display at the Pentagon's PX?...

Anna Anderson's claim that she was Anastasia, the daughter of Czar Nicholas II, is no longer taken seriously by historians, according to Robert Massie, the author of a new book, *The Romanovs*. He explains that a DNA test has proved that Anderson wasn't a Romanov. Maybe she should have hired Johnny Cochran....

The terrible indifference to morality of the American bar—the deputy White House Chief of Staff Harold Ickes' legal work for a crooked union is the most recent example explored in this magazine—may have sunk to a new depth with Michael Abbell, the former chief of the Justice Department division dealing with international narcotics, who, six months after he left the government, put his expertise at the service of the Cali cartel.

In response to this outrage, Peter Bensinger, former head of the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration proposed in an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* to prohibit such a transfer of allegiance from taking place for four years. Why four years? Why not forever? Why on earth should a government lawyer be permitted to hand over to gangsters information he gained while prosecuting their pals?...

But I should say that sometimes I do sympathize with lawyers. Having been one myself, I can remember some excruciating moments that you wouldn't want anyone to have to endure. One of the worst is when your client says something in open court that absolutely blows your case. This happened to Kristine Eagle of Stockton, California, when her client admitted on the stand that he had killed a prostitute: "I wanted to beat up a prostitute, take my anger out on her. I wanted someone I can have control over. I wanted to ruin someone else's day."

Ms. Eagle fainted. I would have, too....

Do you realize that Newt Gingrich has broken both of the commitments he made to Bill Clinton during their joint appearance in New Hampshire this spring? According to the AP's account of the event, "Gingrich said he hoped to give the President the line-item veto by this summer and 'to name a bipartisan commission to propose lobbying, campaign finance and other political reforms.'" Despite reminders from the President, Gingrich has failed to deliver....

If there is a heaven, Franklin Roosevelt must be up there shaking his head about the Republicans and muttering, "Where were those guys when I needed them?" During his presidency, he was reviled by Republican leaders. But a few months ago we heard Newt Gingrich announcing that FDR was one of his heroes. Now comes the news that Robert Dole's wife, Liddy, gave him Doris Kearns Goodwin's biography of the Roosevelts, *No Ordinary Time*, for his birthday. Last but not least, Colin Powell recently said, "I'm still a New Deal kid from Harlem and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the South Bronx. Franklin Roosevelt's picture was in my home." Okay, I'm not sure Powell is a Republican, but it's certainly looking more and more like he's thinking of running as one....

"Would you disqualify Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, and others who didn't have a formal military career from a place in history?" asks a reader who is puzzled by my criticism of members of Congress and the Clinton Administration for not having served in the military. He urges me to point out that my favorite president, Franklin Roosevelt, was never in the military. My answer is that not all leaders have to have served, but enough to understand what life in the military is like, to have a hands-on feel for the problems, the dangers, and the hustles. Eisenhower understood the last so well that he was our most effective president at controlling the military budget. And remember that while FDR was not actually in the military, he served as assistant secretary of the Navy for eight years and understood the military bureaucracy better than any recent president besides Ike....

My areas of agreement with George Allen, Republican governor of Virginia, are few, but I must congratulate him for dramatically reducing the use of state cars by agency heads and other state employees. Government cars are far too often used for private purposes or simply to confer a sense of importance on an official. In West Virginia, just one county, Kanawha, spent more than $700,000 on new vehicles in just the last four years. There are now 18 assigned just to the assessor's office.

Another scandal in the assessor's office concerned the firing of the personnel director. The real scandal is why did it have a personnel director in the first place? In similar small offices in the private sector the boss usually does the hiring and firing without benefit of a personnel director. But there are personnel officers everywhere in practically every level of government. In the District of Columbia, for example, we have a Department of Personnel large enough to have 17 phone numbers listed under it. Why then are there 16 individual personnel offices in the District government, including one for the Department of Personnel itself?

Another area of overemployment is in budget offices. The District has an overall Budget Office. It also has individual budget divisions in the Department of Public Works, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and the Department of Parks and Recreation. Each of these also has an accounting division.

The mayor has an office with a press secretary and a public information division in it. There are also public information units in the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Regulatory Affairs. All this for a city with a population of less than 600,000....

As regular readers know, I am a faithful reader of Mike Causey's "Federal Diary" column in *The Washington Post*. Although his sympathy for his audience leads him to resolute advocacy of pro-civil servant positions, he is also a good reporter, so that if you read him closely you will sometimes find out facts that the bureaucrats are not eager for the rest of the world to know. Thus if you've heard their complaints about how underpaid they are, you may be interested in this sentence from a recent Causey column: "Most [civil servants] get some kind of pay raise, promotion or longevity increase every year." How many people in private employment can say the same?...

Lest we get carried away with praising Governor George Allen of Virginia, it should be noted that he was recently the co-host for a $500-a-plate dinner sponsored by the National Rifle Association....

This summer I was talking to a couple of our interns, who are students at my old college, Columbia. I was interested in how things were different today. They said that you could never open a book and get a C (or even a B), although As are still extremely difficult to obtain. We had a few generous graders in my day—Mark Van Doren was one—but you usually had to do all the reading to be sure of passing. I know because in my enthusiasm for New York night-life, I often tested the limits of irresponsibility. The unfortunate result of today's grade inflation is that students can work their behinds off and get the same B that their shiftless, beer-swilling roommates receive....

Newt Gingrich advocates the death penalty for drug smugglers. This is not irrational. One way of ending drug crime is draconian punishment. It has worked in Singapore. But I suspect Americans are too humane to go that route. The only other way to stop the crime is to end drug prohibition, as Joshua Shenk urges in this issue on page 32....

I have long suspected that one reason that Japan has greater economic success than China is that the Chinese people, although equally industrious and clever, tend not to trust people outside their families. I understand that Francis Fukuyama expresses a similar theory in his new book *Trust* (see Jonathan Rowe's review on page 58). I wonder if he also subscribes to my explanation of why the Chinese citizens of Hong Kong, despite this lack of trust, were able to play such a prominent role in the economic miracle that has taken

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place there in the last 50 years. I suspect the miracle was possible because the British law of contracts played the same role as trust, by making it possible for businessmen to count on their agreements being adhered to because they were enforceable under law. Fukuyama, by the way, also classifies Italy and France as "low trust" countries. This seems somewhat less persuasive. Both countries, especially France, have enjoyed economic success from time to time in their history. Indeed, the last time I was in Paris, I couldn't believe how many Frenchmen could afford the restaurants I couldn't dream of entering....

In his review of the new book about Warren Buffett (see page 55), Joseph Nocera is a tad tougher than I would have been on the book's subject. Of course, in the interest of full disclosure, I should reveal that I'm grateful to Warren for twice having come to this magazine's rescue in times of serious fiscal peril. But that was 20 years ago, so I don't think I'm too biased on his behalf. I also know I've never encountered a more brilliant mind than Warren's. Hanging in the same ring with him during an argument is an intellectual challenge—your knees begin to tremble when he pulls out that slide rule—that is guaranteed to give you a lifetime insurance policy against arrogance.

Like Nocera, however, I'm disappointed that Buffett, having proved he is the world's greatest investor, is not now using his gifts for more constructive purposes than making money. This regret is made keener by the knowledge that Warren can write. Take just two issues we agree on: the unfairness of inherited wealth and the need for long-term investment. If Warren had written extensively about the subject, I'm confident we would now have higher estate and inheritance taxes, which would at last give the wealthy a chance to prove that they are as deserving of winning life's race as they think they are. We might also have a capital gains tax that is merciful on long-term gain but practically confiscatory on short-term profits, thus reducing the tendency of American capitalism to focus on the short-term bottom line instead of the long-term investment that will produce better products and more jobs.

Warren's problem is not that he's a bad guy, but that he's riding the tiger, meaning he feels he has to go on making more and more because of his obligation to Berkshire Hathaway's shareholders, who bought their stock because of their faith in his magic....

I have not been among the legion of admirers of I.M. Pei's East Building of the National Gallery, which I felt might have been spectacular in another location, but, placed as it is, unhappily obstructs the view of the Capitol from Pennsylvania Avenue. Buried in a recent article in praise of the building in *The Washington Post*, I found someone who agreed with me, William Walton, an artist who was chairman of the Washington Fine Arts Commission at the time the building was approved. Walton voted against it, arguing that although "the building is a beauty—stirring, subtle, imaginative ... what worries me is its height ... a strong unbroken line at the cornice ... will be a harsh, overassertive terminus to the long line of buildings leading toward the Capitol."

Curiously, Walton was a close friend of John Kennedy and worked with me in the 1960 campaign in West Virginia. Unfortunately, those days were too hectic for us to discover that we were in harmony on aesthetics as well as politics....

Among the Republican proposals for reforming Medicare, there are some good ideas, such as requiring affluent beneficiaries to pay more for what they get. But the GOP's target of reducing Medicare spending by $270 billion is too high. Our best information is that only a $90 billion reduction is needed to save Medicare. If the Republicans weren't planning that tax cut of theirs, the other $180 billion would not be necessary....

Some years ago, Richard Cohen of *The Washington Post* wrote an unfavorable review of my book, *How Washington Really Works*, but he said so many laudatory things about the *Monthly* and me in the process that I could not be angry. I felt the same way about a recent piece by Jane Mayer in the "Talk of the Town" section of *The New Yorker*. It too said enough nice things that I can't be angry, but I am concerned that it may have given some of you the impression that I had done something vaguely wrong, perhaps even hypocritical and unethical. So I feel a need to explain. Unfortunately, to do so requires more detail than many readers will care to know, and for that I apologize. But most of all, I want to be sure you understand what I did and why I did it.

Elsa Walsh is the wife of Bob Woodward, whom I've known for more than 20 years. She has written a new book that includes a long section about Rachael Worby, a symphony orchestra conductor from New York and the wife of the governor of West Virginia, Gaston Caperton. I know both Gaston and Rachael, but not well, not as well, for example, as I know Bob Woodward.

Walsh's publisher sent me an advance copy of the book. I saw the Worby section ended with her described as being huddled on the stairs of the Woodwards' house in Washington, whispering "I don't

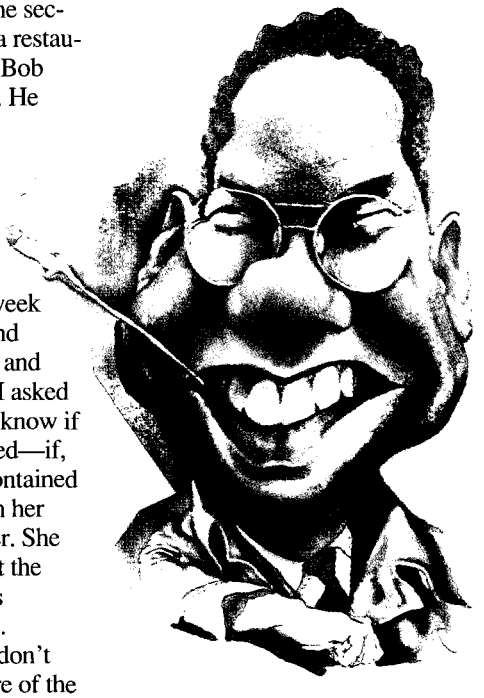
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

want to go home. I'm so unhappy there. I don't want to go back." Since she was already widely suspected by West Virginians—hypersensitive at being criticized by New York artists like Worby—of looking down on our state, I knew this would hurt Gaston politically.

A few days after I read the section, I was having lunch at a restaurant, where by coincidence Bob Woodward was also eating. He stopped at my table to say hello, and I told him that I had read Elsa's book and liked it but thought Worby's last words were "a bullet aimed at the governor's political heart." A week or so later Elsa called me and asked me not to tell Gaston and Rachael about the chapter. I asked her if she wouldn't want to know if she were similarly threatened—if, for example, a new book contained an embarrassing quote from her husband about her employer. She said that was irrelevant, that the point was that the book was "embargoed." But it wasn't.

Occasionally publishers don't want any advance disclosure of the contents of a book and they either absolutely prohibit or carefully restrict its distribution. But most of the time they send advance copies because they want the book to be talked about and publicized. They may ask that direct quotes be checked against the final copy. And of course, they don't want too much of the book disclosed because readers won't have any reason to buy it. But they're delighted to see enough tidbits get out to entice readers to buy the book. In fact, I've often disclosed some of the juicier of these tidbits in advance. You may remember that we did that with Marlin Fitzwater's comments about John Sununu and Richard Darman, months before the book's publication date. Walsh's employer, *The Washington Post*, printed other material from the Fitzwater book before the publication date.

In any event, I wrote Gaston and Rachael, telling them that the book was nothing to worry about if they saw their future outside West Virginia, which was what I suspected, but that if they planned a future



in West Virginia politics after Gaston left the governorship in 1997 as required by law, they should try to get Elsa to change that ending, although I feared they would not succeed. Gaston called and thanked me for the letter and asked me for advice on how to proceed. I said I couldn't give such advice. I just wanted to warn him about the book.

The New Yorker account implies that I did something wrong by tipping off a political crony who might have tried to cover up something he shouldn't. So let's break down the charge into its various elements.

First, Caperton is not a crony of mine. In my entire life, I've only had two conversations with him that lasted more than a few minutes, and we have never talked alone. He is not now and has never been a source of mine, and this is what I have complained of in other journalists: when they protect or write fondly about sources in return for being fed the inside skinny.

Second, could my tip have enabled the governor to cover up some chicanery? No, it involved no misdeed of his whatsoever, absolutely nothing that reflected on his competence or integrity. This was not about something he had done. It was about something his wife had said that had nothing to do with his duties but that could hurt him.

Third, if Caperton had been in a position to threaten Elsa Walsh, my view of this might be different. But he is the lame duck governor of West Virginia. She is the wife of Bob Woodward, one of the most powerful journalists in America. Caperton had, it seems to me, a perfect right to try to persuade her, and I had a perfect right to suggest such a course to him. She also had a right to refuse to change the ending. She exercised that right. So I can't understand what she has to complain about.

Fourth, I had nothing to gain from warning Caperton. In the practical terms of my life as a journalist, I have more to gain from Bob Woodward's good will and more to lose by irritating him.

Finally, according to a recent article in *Newsweek,* Elsa Walsh had herself given Rachael Worby an advance copy of the manuscript. So she could not have been afraid that I would reveal the contents of the book to the Capertons. What she clearly was afraid of was that I would express my *opinion* of the book's probable impact on the governor. Did I not have a right to express my opinion? Did Elsa Walsh have any greater right to keep me quiet?

Maybe I should call the ACLU....

—*Charles Peters*

Roman Genn

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"What the Public Doesn't Know Can't Hurt Us"

There are three things in modern America you can count on: The rich get richer. The poor get poorer. And conservatives lie about it

BY PAUL KRUGMAN

To a naive reader, Edward N. Wolff's *Top Heavy: A Study of the Increasing Inequality of Wealth in America* might seem unlikely to provoke strong emotional reactions. Wolff, a professor of economics at New York University, provides a rather dry, matter-of-fact summary of trends in wealth distribution, followed by a low-key case for a modest wealth tax. Although Wolff has done a commendable technical job in combining data from a number of sources to produce a fuller picture—in particular, his book tells us more about both long-term trends and international comparisons than has previously been available—the rough outlines of this story have been familiar and uncontroversial among economists for at least the past five years.

And yet Wolff's book has been the target of an astonishing barrage of conservative attacks: Multiple op-eds in *The Wall Street Journal* ("What Wealth Gap?" asked Michael Novak on July 11), hostile book reviews and so on. Why should such a mild-mannered little volume provoke such rage?

The answer is that this is a subject on which many conservatives are unable to hold a rational discussion. Make a mere statement of fact—say, for example, that the top 20 percent of households in the United States own 85 percent of the marketable wealth—and conservatives will insist that you rephrase it as "20 percent of the households have *created* 85 percent of the wealth." Try to assess long-term trends in income distribution using the standard, apolitical device of comparing incomes at the same stage of successive business cycles, such as 1973 and 1989, and you will be accused of an outrageous attempt to distort Ronald Reagan's record by mixing in the Carter years.

Conservatives are wrong about wealth inequality, but they are not irrational. There is a method and political purpose to their maddened reaction—a determination to deny the facts that is dramatically illustrated by House Majority Leader Richard Armey's new book, *The Freedom Revolution*. Put simply, conservatives don't want the public to know too much because they fear it would hurt them politically.

To understand the significance of Wolff's book, consider this simple parable: There are two societies. In one, everyone makes a living at some occu-

Paul Krugman, a Stanford University economist, is the author of Peddling Prosperity *and* The Age of Diminished Expectations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pation—say, fishing—in which the amount people earn over the course of a year is fairly closely determined by their skill and effort. Incomes will not be equal in this society—some people are better at fishing than others, some people are willing to work harder than others—but the range of incomes will not be that wide. And there will be a sense that those who catch a lot of fish have earned their success.

In the other society, the main source of income is gold prospecting. A few find rich mother lodes and become wealthy. Others find smaller deposits, and many find themselves working hard for very little reward. The result will be a very unequal distribution of income. Some of this will still reflect effort and skill: Those who are especially alert to signs of gold, or willing to put in longer hours prospecting, will on average do better than those who are not. But there will be many skilled, industrious prospectors who do not get rich and a few who become immensely so.

Surely the great majority of Americans, no matter how conservative, instinctively feel that a nation that resembles the second imaginary society is a worse place than one that resembles the first. Yet there is also no question that our nation today is much less like the benign society of fishermen—and much more like the harsh society of prospectors—than it was a generation ago. The evidence is overwhelming, and it comes from many sources—from government agencies like the Bureau of the Census, from *Fortune's* annual survey of executive compensation, and so on. And, of course, there's the evidence that confronts anyone with open eyes. Tom Wolfe is neither an economist nor a liberal, but he is an acute observer. When he wanted to portray what was happening in American society he came up with the world of *The Bonfire of the Vanities.*

The Way Things Are

Here's a rough (and reasonably certain) picture of what has happened: The standard of living of the poorest 10 percent of American families is significantly lower today than it was a generation ago. Families in the middle are, at best, slightly better off. Only the wealthiest 20 percent of Americans have achieved income growth at anything like the rates nearly everyone experienced between the forties and early seventies. Meanwhile, the income of families high in the distribution has risen dramatically, with something like a doubling of the real incomes of the top 1 percent.

These widening disparities are often attributed to the increasing importance of education. But while it's true that, on average, workers with a college education have done better than those without, the bulk of the divergence has been among those with similar levels of education. High-school teachers have not done as badly as janitors but they have fallen dramatically behind corporate CEOs, even though they have about the same amount of education.

Also, the growth of inequality cannot be described simply as the rise of some group, such as the college educated or the top 20 percent, compared with the rest; the top 5 percent have gotten richer compared with the next 15, the top 1 compared with the next 4, the top 0.25 percent compared with the next 0.75, and onwards all the way to Bill Gates. The important contribution of Wolff's book is that it reinforces the evidence that much of the important action in American inequality has taken place way up the scale, among the extremely well-off.

Wolff focuses on wealth rather than income—on assets rather than cash flow. This has some advantages over annual income as an indicator of a family's economic position, especially among the rich. Someone with a very high income may be having an unusually good year, while it is not unheard of for wealthy families to have negative income if they make a bad investment; in each case their assets will be a better clue to where they really fit in the rankings. More important, however, wealth is in some ways a better indicator than income data of what is happening to the very successful—simply because it is so narrowly held: In 1989, the top 1 percent of families owned 39 percent of the wealth but received only (a still impressive) 16 percent of the income.

A particularly striking statistic in Wolff's book should put an end to the still-widespread tendency to discuss the growth of inequality in America by tracking the fortunes of the top 20 percent, or of college-educated workers. Between 1983 and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1989, while the wealth share of the top 20 percent of families rose substantially, the share of percentiles 80 to 99 actually fell. In other words, when we say that America's rich have gotten richer, by the "rich" we do not mean garden variety yuppies—we mean true plutocrats.

Many conservatives have probably stopped reading by now, or at least stopped being able to respond to this article with anything other than blind anger, but for those who are still with me let me make a crucial point about these statistics: *They say nothing about who, if anyone, is to blame*. To say that America was a far more unequal society in 1989 than it was in 1973 is a simple statement of fact, not an attack on Ronald Reagan. Think about the parable of the fishermen and the prospectors: The greater inequality of the latter society did not come about because it has worse leadership but because it lives in a different environment. And changes in the environment—in world markets, or in technology—might change a society of middle-class fishermen into a society with dismaying extremes of wealth and poverty, without it necessarily being the result of deliberate policies.

Armey apparently takes his new duties as majority leader seriously, because he couldn't have taken much time off to write this book.

In fact, it's pretty certain that this is what has happened in the United States. Ronald Reagan did not single-handedly cause the incomes of the rich to soar and those of the poor to decline. He did cut taxes at the top and social programs at the bottom, but most of the growth in inequality took place in the marketplace, in the pretax incomes of families. (There is a wide range of opinion as to just what happened with the markets, though clearly technology and the changing international trade scene played big roles.) Furthermore, the upward trend in inequality began in the seventies under Nixon, Ford, and Carter and continues in the nineties under Clinton; similar trends, if not so dramatic, are visible in many other countries.

Yet income distribution is a politicized subject all the same. The reason is obvious: The extent of inequality is relevant for policymaking. In the fishermen society, for example, people might feel that only invalids, widows, and orphans deserve public support. In the vastly unequal prospecting world, however, it is easy to imagine a broad public demand that those who have been lucky enough to find gold be required to share a significant fraction of their winnings with those who have not. Indeed, it is hard to see how such a redistributionist program would *not* be popular—if the public understood just what was going on.

It is in light of this possibility—that a redistributionist policy would have broad support if people understood the realities—that we should consider Armey's *The Freedom Revolution*. The good news is that Armey apparently takes his new duties as majority leader seriously; he couldn't have taken much time off to write this book. *The Freedom Revolution* consists largely of standard conservative bromides, backed by a number of unsupported assertions. (As far as I can see, not a single source is cited.)

Despite the book's sloppiness, its message is extremely important—important, that is, to understand as false. The majority leader, a former economics professor, tries to defuse the issue of income inequality by claiming, in essence, that we *really are* still a society of middle-class fishermen. We can all prosper, he says, if the government would only get out of the way.

First, Armey denies that the eighties were a period in which the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. "The statisticians," he writes, "break our population into five income groups, called quintiles. During the eighties they gained in average real income as follows:

Lowest quintile—up 12.2 percent.
Second-lowest—up 10.1 percent.
Middle—up 10.7 percent.
Second-highest—up 11.6 percent.
Highest—up 18.8 percent."

The source for this data, not cited, is the Bureau of the Census's *Current Population Report*. This is helpful to know, because if you check Armey's facts you will find that he is fibbing a bit. These figures are not income gains for all of the eighties, but only from 1983 to 1989. Immediately preceding that recovery, the economy experienced a savage recession, the worst since the Great Depression, that affected the poor much more severely than the rich. The first column of the table below gives the percentage changes for the slump years from 1979 to 1983.

Conservatives will say, "The recession was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Carter's fault, while the recovery proved the success of Reagan's policies." But put politics aside for a moment and accept this simple fact: At the end of the '83 to '89 recovery, the bottom quintile was still worse off than it was in 1979, while the only really large gains over the decade went to the top quintile. If one takes the long view, as in the second column of the table (which measures from the business cycle peak in 1973), one sees an overwhelming picture of radically-growing inequality. And one might correctly suspect even from these data that the pattern continued inside the top quintile, i.e., that the top 5 and the top 1 percent did better still.

When Armey (with his Ph.D. in economics) wrote this passage, he must have had the same table in front of him that I am looking at now. He must therefore have known that he was, strictly speaking, lying when he described his data as being what happened during the "eighties," and could not have failed to notice that, even at the end of his carefully selected period, incomes were far more unequal than they had been in the seventies. In other words, the passage is a deliberate attempt to mislead the reader.

It gets even better. Armey cites a study that shows that there is huge income mobility in America. The message here is simple: Don't worry that some people find gold and some don't—next year you may be the winner. He gives numbers saying that fewer than 15 percent of the "folks" who were in the bottom quintile in 1979 were still there in 1988. He then asserts that it was more likely that someone would move from the bottom quintile to the top than he would stay in place. Again, he doesn't cite the source, but these are familiar numbers. They come from a botched 1992 Bush Administration study, a study that was immediately ridiculed and which its authors would just as soon forget.

This is why: The study tracked a number of people who had paid income taxes in each of the years from 1979 to 1988. Since only about half the working population actually paid taxes over the entire period, this meant that the study was already biased towards tracking the relatively successful. And these earners were then compared to *the population at large*. So the study showed that in 1979, 28 percent of this studied population was in the bottom 20 percent of the whole population; by 1988 that figure was only 7 percent.

This means, Armey asserts, that someone in the lowest quintile would be more likely to move to the highest than stay in place. Put kindly, it's a silly argument. For subjects of the study who moved from the bottom to the top, the typical age in 1979 was only 22. "This isn't your classic income mobility," Kevin Murphy of the University of Chicago remarked at the time. "This is the guy who works in the college bookstore and has a real job by the time he is in his early thirties."

In reality, moves from the bottom to the top quintile are extremely rare; a typical estimate is that only about 3 percent of families who are in the bottom 20 percent in one year will be in the top 20 percent a decade later. About half will still be in the bottom quintile. And even those 3 percent that move aren't necessarily Horatio Alger stories. The top quintile includes everyone from a $60,000 a year regional manager to Warren Buffett.

Armey is no fool. He cannot be unaware that he is fudging his numbers. Possibly he regards a small fib as justifiable in the service of a higher truth. Or possibly he has managed to achieve a state of doublethink, in which the distinction between what is politically convenient to believe and the objective facts no longer exists. The end result is the same: His book is an effort to obscure the stark realities of growing inequality.

And that is no surprise. After all, the success of free-market conservatives in seizing the mantle of populism in America, despite the growing gap between the broad public and a small minority possessing astonishing wealth, is inherently vulnerable. It took a combination of brilliant political leadership on the right and an awesome mixture of political ineptitude, personal arrogance, and cultural elitism on the part of liberals to give Armey and their allies their current position of power. (I sometimes think that the Renaissance Weekend killed the Clinton Administra-

Percentage Income Change by Income Bracket for the Periods 1979-1983 and 1973-1989.

Income Bracket	1979-1983	1973-1989
Lowest quintile	-14.2	-3.6
Second lowest	-8.1	3.1
Middle	-6.2	9.0
Second highest	-2.9	14.8
Highest	-1.4	26.0

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion.)

But despite the triumph of 1994, there is always the risk that someone will point out that there are now quite a few men in America who each make more money every year than the entire House of Representatives, and that it is these men who will be the most conspicuous beneficiaries of the new majority's politics.

As far as Armey and his allies are concerned, the answer to this risk is simple: The public must not know how well the rich have done compared with the rest. If a new study points out just how much income and wealth have become concentrated, deploy the forces of the conservative media to attack the data with every spurious argument imaginable. There are always plenty of places to publish such attacks and people to write them because the rich are different from you and me: They have (a lot) more money. In particular, they own magazines and newspapers, and readily support think tanks staffed with people whose job, whatever its formal description, is to support the interests of their donors. As H.L. Mencken once pointed out, it is difficult to get a man to understand something when his income depends on his not understanding it.

The uneasy politics of free-market populism are also probably a major reason why the Republican majority in Congress seems determined to mount an assault on economic analysis in general—not only to eliminate the President's Council of Economic Advisors, but to eliminate all National Science Foundation funding for the field, and to slash the budget of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (which provides the basic data on national income).

The irony is that much of this research provides support for Republican free market ideology. But the motivation for cutting the funding is easy enough to understand: If your doctrine depends on a view of the economy that is flatly contradicted by reality, then the fewer facts, the better.

Edward Wolff has written a good book, while Richard Armey has written a terrible one. The real message, however, comes from the contrast between them—between the mildly liberal economics professor who is disturbed by the trends in our society and would like to make a small effort to ameliorate them, and the tough-talking conservative who is determined to deny the reality of these trends and to smash anyone who reports on them. May the better man win. □

The Washington Monthly

JOURNALISM AWARD

JULY 1995

Tyler Bridges
The New Orleans Times-Picayune

For over a century, an arcane law has allowed each Louisiana legislator to waive tuition to Tulane University for a designated student—a perk worth almost $19,000 per year—without public scrutiny. The *Times-Picayune* sued to obtain scholarship records and found that the recipients were largely the children of legislators, sheriffs, judges, campaign donors, and other purveyors of influence, while more needy students lost out.

Jeff Leen and Don Van Natta, Jr.
The Miami Herald

Dade County, Florida used to drop more than 1,000 felony cases annually, because police officers failed to show up for pre-trial meetings with prosecutors, and the officers were never disciplined for their absences. The *Herald*'s exposure of police truancy prompted reform by police chiefs and prosecutors alike.

Lesley Stahl
"60 Minutes"

Interviewee Victor Crawford, a former tobacco lobbyist dying of throat cancer, confessed his dirtiest trade secrets—including drumming up scientific evidence to downplay smoking's dangers. But to its credit, "60 Minutes" went further by putting Crawford's revelations in context: the tobacco lobby's return to favor in the GOP Congress.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009. Nominations for stories run in September are due October 10.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

83¢ is all it takes to understand politics, the economy, the arts, and the inner workings of Washington.*

Every week the editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC put together the best ideas and boldest commentary available on the political, social, and cultural scene.

For Fastest Service Call 1-800-827-1289

Andrew Sullivan, Leon Wieseltier, Michael Kinsley, Ann Hulbert, Robert Wright, Mickey Kaus, Charles Lane and Michael Lind focus in on the true stories behind the headlines. Writers like Stanley Crouch, Naomi Wolf, John Updike, Malcolm Gladwell, and Tatyana Tolstaya are regular contributors. Stanley Kauffmann and Robert Brustein cover the latest in film and theater, and Mark Strand brings you the best in contemporary poetry.

Discover the award-winning weekly, THE NEW REPUBLIC, where politics, art, culture, and opinion are presented with style, wit and intelligence.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

1220 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

FREE ISSUE RESERVATION

Yes, please send me the next issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC - absolutely free. If I like it, I'll pay just $19.99 for a six month's subscription (23 more issues for a total of 24). That's a savings of 42% off the basic subscription price.*

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED:

If I choose not to subscribe I'll write "cancel" across your invoice, return it, and owe nothing at all. Either way the free issue is mine to keep.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

** Introductory offer valid for first time subscribers only. Please call for foreign rates.*

Return this coupon to:

The New Republic
P.O. Box 602
Mt. Morris, IL 61054

AWAM53

* Less than the cost of a cup of cappuccino

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tidbits & Outrages

THE CLUCK STOPS HERE
When employees were late to work at the Volvo plant in Dublin, Virginia, the plant managers would send a man dressed in a rooster suit to scold them. When Marshall Lineberry was late one day and the rooster approached him, Lineberry jumped at the rooster and began to choke him. Lineberry was fired and sued for unemployment benefits. He won. Judge Colin Gibb decided that the rooster was bound to be attacked sooner or later.

The New York Times

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JULY 29, 1995

SENATE VOTES 98-0 FOR STRICT LIMITS ON LOBBYIST GIFTS

COMPLIANCE VOLUNTARY

AND IN A RELATED STORY, BOB PACKWOOD IS VERY DISAPPOINTED
The New Yorker recently corrected a mistaken quotation of William Bennett in a piece by Michael Kelly. "In criticizing the political views of Patrick Buchanan, Mr. Bennett said, 'it's a real us-and-them kind of thing,' not, as we reported, 'it's a real S&M kind of thing.'"

AND PROUST DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO MODEL
Supermodel Naomi Campbell explained her mostly-ghost-written novel *Swan* this way: "I just did not have time to sit down and write a book."

FOOD, REFRESHMENTS, AND WATER BONGS WILL BE PROVIDED
"The University of Pittsburgh Office of Admissions and Financial Aid," a recent announcement reads, "cordially invites you and your family to attend an 'Informational Program' for high seniors."

THE CASE FOR HITLER
"I don't see Pat Robertson as being opposed to Jewish interests," former Bush aide Jay Lefkowitz told *The New York Times*. "Deep down, I believe that a little antisemitism is good for Jews—it reminds us of who we are."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Wild West Wing

One day's shootout in the press briefing corral

BY MARLIN FITZWATER

Every morning they read *The Washington Post* that hits their front door and listen to National Public Radio while they shower. Then, their appetites whetted by the day's news, they creep out of the underbrush of Washington neighborhoods and come to the White House briefing room.

They are the lions of the press. They enter through the Secret Service gate on Pennsylvania Avenue, submit their cameras for search, show their passes for the 500th time, snarl at the uniformed police manning the identification computers, and finally trudge up the long and winding driveway to work.

They are entering a cage as real as any zoo ever constructed. Their movements within the White House are monitored and managed. The president's schedule determines their lunch time and their leaving time; his agenda controls their thoughts and ideas. Presidential minions just out of college will tell them to "wait here" and "move there." By the 11 a.m. briefing (known as "the feeding time"), they are pissed. It's no wonder.

For the White House staff, the press is a problem to be managed, like a cocklebur that attaches to your pants leg. We move them around like checkers—into the Oval Office at the top of each meeting, into the Rose Garden for a bill signing. This is the power center of the democratic universe. The more the president's power is challenged by sources outside the White House, the more it is exercised *within* the White House.

In March 1987, the outside challenges could be counted in truckloads—from the Tower Board looking into the "arms for hostages" question, from Democrats hungry for the presidency, and from a press corps that smelled the blood of an injured president. Reagan would conduct public events the way groundhogs test the day, sticking out his nose for a time, uttering a few words, then quickly ducking back into the Oval Office.

It was Friday, March 13, 1987. As usual, I began my day by greeting Carl Jones, who has welcomed White House visitors through seven presidential administrations. Carl has a 14-inch TV set stashed in the coat closet, and can stand in the doorway watch-

Marlin Fitzwater was press secretary to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush. This article is adapted from Call the Briefing. *Copyright © 1995, by Martin Fitzwater. To be published by Times Books, a division of Random House, Inc.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing the morning news, take my coat, welcome me to the day, and never miss a beat. Sometimes he would warn me, "Lot of reporters around today."

He said that today.

Oh Christ, I thought. *What have I missed?* "Got a paper, Carl?" He motioned me to the coffee table. The stories on the *Post*'s front page seemed harmless. Something about the new certification procedures for the Soviet arms-control treaty. No emotion there. Certainly wouldn't cause reporters to come in early to try to ambush me going into the White House, or even cause Carl to notice.

Must be *The New York Times*, I thought, which was buried beneath *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Times*. I dug it out, glanced at both sides of the fold, and my heart stopped. The headline was, "Reagan Counsel Recounts Chaos Over Iran Affair." Peter Wallison, who had just resigned as the President's counsel, but not yet announced it publicly, must be covering his ass. The first paragraph confirmed it: "President Reagan's chief legal adviser today depicted scenes of chaos in the White House in recent months and said he had been prevented from looking into the Iran affair for several weeks after its disclosure last November." Wallison had given the interview to Gerald Boyd of the *Times*'s Washington bureau.

I knew what this meant: My morning briefing would be war. There is nothing the press likes better than internal squabbling—even better if there's a hint that the President might be blamed. Most of all, this provided them with an opportunity to break my rock-solid policy of not discussing Iran-Contra from the White House.

When I started the new job on February 2, 1987, Oliver North, John Poindexter, and Bud McFarlane had all departed the National Security Council, and the Iran-Contra investigation was just getting into full swing. The Tower Board, including Senator John Tower, General Brent Scowcroft, and former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie, had been appointed by President Reagan to look into the sale of arms to Iran and make policy recommendations. The Congress was about to hold hearings. And an independent counsel, Lawrence E. Walsh of Oklahoma City, had been appointed to investigate any criminal activity related to the affair.

I saw the outside investigations as a blessing. After all, the independent counsel law was passed on the theory that the White House could not investigate itself. So why try, in any way, shape, or form? My policy would be: "This matter is being fully investigated by three outside bodies and not by the White House. We will leave all answers to them." In the winter of 1987, if I pretended to know even one fact in my briefings about Iran-Contra, the press would tie me in knots.

I entered my office and Roman Popadiuk came in behind me. Roman worked for my foreign policy deputy, Dan Howard, and had worked in the White House situation room before joining the press office staff. Later he would become my own deputy, and in 1991, he became America's first ambassador to the newly independent nation of Ukraine. But in 1987, I had only known him a week, and he was a Foreign Service officer with no press experience.

He said he didn't think we had a problem. "Wallison is a bit player," he said. "The press won't care about this."

"Wrong, Roman," I said. "They love this. Internal feuding. Chaos. Legal counsel turned away. Another stone wall in the making. They will kill me at my briefing.... Now get me everything you can on Wallison. What did he want this information for? What's he doing? When did he start? I'll take care of the nasty stuff, like why he's accusing his own president of covering up."

"What will you say when the press asks if the President agrees with Wallison, or if he's going to fire him?"

"Don't ever forget," I told Roman. "The President has full confidence in *everyone* in the Administration, right up until the day he fires them. If you don't say that, if you ever imply the President is down on someone, that person is dead. No one will return his calls. His power is gone. My rule is this: Never criticize anyone in the name of the President unless the President tells you to, and even then, don't do it."

"OK," Roman said. "What will you say?"

That was easy: I would stall. Wallison had already resigned, as had his chief of staff, Don Regan. I'll just say I have to check it out. Once he's gone, the press won't much care anyway. No power, no press.

I needed three lines to use on this thing—lines to stick to no matter how long this affair dragged on. And I needed to write them down.

First, the arms sales to Iran are being

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

investigated by three independent bodies. We are not investigating ourselves. The independent counsel law was designed to prevent that.

Second, we are not going to comment on any information from these investigations. We will comment only when they are completed.

Third, President Reagan brought this matter to the public's attention as soon as he discovered it. He asked for an independent counsel and the White House will fully cooperate with the investigations.

I opened the staff meeting. We always started with the President's schedule, then turned to the day's main story. My goal was to find some way to "advance" that story, give it a White House dimension, add color, give it urgency—all with the aim of influencing the story so it reflected the President's viewpoint. I also liked to know five basic facts about five other stories in the news. If I could do this, I would be smarter than the reporters.

We looked at the schedule. Routine all day. Nothing to overwhelm the Wallison story. I was left to fight this one alone.

"Keep your ears open down there today," I told my staff. "Listen for the anger. Is anyone really pissed at this Wallison thing, or do they dismiss his comments as CYA [cover your ass]? Also, let me know if this is the television network story of the day. If it is, I have to be stern as hell, to treat this really seriously. If they are dismissing it, I'll try to get in and out of it quickly, not build up the story. Also, try and find out what Lou Cannon or David Hoffman [of *The Washington Post*] think. They may be so mad that the *Times* got the story, they will ignore it just to devalue the scoop. If that's the case, I really want to lie low."

We had only two hours for all this to happen, but in that time every reporter in the building would pass through the lower press office. Half of them would call in to check the President's schedule. If my people were alert, I would have those answers by 11 o'clock. When the time came, I collected my notes, especially my statement on Wallison, shoved them into a black briefing book, and stood up to get a breath. I put my jacket on and fought the butterflies and the fear. From the first day in 1987 to January 20, 1993, there was always fear. Unfortunately, fear leads to an overwhelming desire to use the bathroom.

"Call the briefing," I said to Liz Murphy Kloak, a young assistant. When my staff heard the word "call" they began to run. Liz told my secretary to announce the meeting, then headed for the lower press office to alert the staff, get the podium secured, the klieg lights on, the microphones and amplifiers in place, and remove any old newspapers left strewn about the podium. She also checked to see that no one had placed obscene pictures or derogatory comments on the stage. While she did this, I stopped by the bathroom next to the Oval Office.

As I reached the briefing room, the television lights flashed on. The standing room only crowd was positioned around the back and side aisles, reporters were holding their tape recorders, and the White House Communications Agency Army enlisted man was ready with electronic boxes that would beam my briefing into the Foreign Press Center across town, to the State and Defense De-

Television: An Opiate for Journalists

Some years ago the press got it into its head that follow-up questions allowed it to be tough, to ask that penetrating second question that would render the president utterly helpless. Reporters must dream about the president turning into a mound of quivering Jell-O when faced with one of their sizzling follow-ups.

In fact, the result is just the opposite. The follow-up question allows the president time to more fully consider his first answer, and then to leave the issue with just the right words. It also means that the president in 30 minutes will receive about 26 questions on 13 subjects. If everyone got a separate question, he would have to cover 20 to 25 different subjects, a much harder task.

I always feared that reporters would discover this and return to the "one question" format, but by the time some reporters made the connection it was too late. Television had taken over. With the cameras trained on the questioner, and reporters standing before the world with one fleeting chance at fame, none wanted to give up the air time, the new lifeblood of journalism. And another thing. It takes nearly 20 seconds for the television producers to identify the questioner and put his or her name on the screen below the picture. Now everyone wants to ask a follow-up.

Television is an opiate for journalists. It gives them fame, power in the eyes of their peers, recognition by their families, ego gratification, and lecture fees from the Storm Door and Sash Associations of the world.

–M.F.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

partments, to other White House staff, and finally to the Oval Office, to an audience of one that loomed behind me like the Wizard of Oz. "Go get 'em Max Marlin," one assistant said as I rushed past her into the briefing room and took my first reading on the group before me.

They seemed relatively calm. I went through the daily schedule and read a statement on the economy. The press dutifully took it down, then turned to the business at hand. My heart began racing.

"Did Wallison tell the President that Poindexter told him that he had no role—as the Iran affair broke? That he had no role in investigating it? I mean, was the President aware that there was this standoff?" Leave it to Sam Donaldson to get things rolling. His famous voice was rising and falling in each sentence, punctuating the incredulity of his question, making it clear that he could not believe the President's naiveté or Poindexter's collusions. Reporter questions are seldom uttered in full sentences. One question tends to bounce off another. Even Sam was hard to follow.

"I saw the story in the *Times* this morning where Peter says that—talks about his relationship with Poindexter," I said. "I have no reason to doubt that, but I don't have any independent knowledge of what his relationship with Poindexter was." I mentioned the *Times* to signal that I had no independent knowledge and did not intend to make news on this matter.

"Well, it isn't just that," Sam said. "We want to know if the President was told that Poindexter was stonewalling on giving information." The press always wants to take the information to the president, put it in his mouth, and then figure the consequences. Indeed, all that really matters to them is the president.

"I don't think the President was told at the time," I ventured, "but I don't know about subsequent conversations." I had no idea, of course, but decided to take a chance on the first phrase in order to give credibility to the second. If Wallison had told the President, he would have said so in the interview.

"We were told every day here at briefings that Peter Wallison was working on a chronology for the President; that's why you couldn't answer questions. Excuse me, your predecessor."

Then NBC's Chris Wallace picked up the trail, holding a copy of the *Times*, as he often did, and trying to ascertain some ambiguity between my comments and Wallison's. "But when did—yes—Wallison also says that referring to the President then—the Iran initiative—he says the President does not agree with the Tower Board that he shouldn't have done it and he still believes the policy is valid. Is that an accurate reflection of the President's views?"

Accurate? I couldn't even tell what Chris was saying, let alone Wallison. Do these people think I go to the President every morning and get him to reflect on stories? Do they think we just sit around and chew the fat each morning on what's in the news? Whenever the press got around to the "What does the President think?" questions, I knew it was time to lay down some rules and get serious.

"The President's position was stated in his March 4 speech at some length. It has not changed. And I refer you to that speech," I said, implying that I was not going to speculate.

"So Peter is wrong about the President having no regrets?" Chris said.

The President's speech on March 4, 1987, his first following the Tower Board report released on February 26, accepted the board's conclusions and expressed his regret about the arms for hostages action. Now Chris thought he could get me to acknowledge some kind of change in the President's position, thereby ratcheting up the story for his evening news piece.

We argued back and forth for several minutes, repeating questions and answers. I got so involved in the questioning, and trying to follow the twisted logic they were presenting, that I forgot to present my new policy. I did get it in piecemeal, saying the White House was not investigating itself, the President did not know of the diversion of funds, and we welcomed the independent counsel investigation. But it was a poor performance and I knew I would not capture the offensive in tonight's stories. At least I hadn't gotten into trouble by offering any new evidence that could be presented to Congress or used to embarrass me.

Then Helen Thomas of UPI took a wild guess—or maybe it was her sixth sense, or maybe she'd been tipped-off—and she asked if the President was going to amend his acceptance of the Tower Board report in his Saturday address.

Now this was something. The Tower Board said that although Caspar Weinberger, the Secre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tary of Defense, did not support the policy of arms for hostages, he did not stop it or try hard enough to stop it. The President's advisers were telling him he had to accept the entire Tower report. If he tried to pick and choose among the conclusions, the American people would be skeptical of the whole thing. But now Weinberger was begging the President to exonerate him in the Saturday address. Weinberger wanted the President to say he accepted everything in the report, except the part about Weinberger.

I had to be careful. I didn't want to say anything that would be contradicted later. "There will be some mention of Secretary Shultz and Secretary Weinberger in the address," I said, "but that's all I can say."

This prompted a chorus of questions. Once I let them know that Secretary of State George Shultz also wanted absolution, the pressure was even greater. They knew that Shultz threatened to quit every time someone in the administration questioned his authority.

"In other words, Weinberger is really putting pressure on the President?" "Has Secretary Shultz weighed in on this question?" "Does the President accept it in full or not?"

"The President's position is quite clear in his speech and it will be clear tomorrow in his Saturday radio address," I said. "I have nothing to add."

They started again, like cannon fire.

"Well, how can it be clear in two ways?" "How can you tell that it's clear tomorrow if you haven't seen it?"

"Because everything the President says is clear," I said, hoping for levity.

"He's the Wizard of Oz," someone joked.

I tried again to get my new Iran-Contra statement out, but I was halfhearted. At least I didn't sound defensive—and I was still standing. After only 39 minutes, the briefing ended. It was relatively short by daily standards.

When Helen said, "Thank you," as she did by tradition as the "dean" of the White House press corps, it was with reluctance. She always seemed as if she hated to let me go. No press secretary had ever walked away from a briefing without being excused and survived. It was the tightest unwritten rule: "The Press Secretary Stays Until He is Dismissed by the Press." It is their iron grip on your life. It is why there is no premium on snappy answers, or concise statements, or even great presentation. The premium is on patience and survivability because they will hold you at the podium until everyone has tried breaking you.

There is a Wild West quality to it. You feel like the gunslinger at first, armed with presidential words and deeds. But each reporter has an invisible string tied to your belt buckle. They torture you with repetitive questions. When they see that your mouth is dry, and that you have probably made at least one embarrassing slip, then Helen turns in her seat, twists until she can see over her shoulder, and decides if the lions have any fight left. If not, you are thanked and dismissed.

I moved quickly off the podium and retraced my steps up the hall, past the lower press office, past the Oval Office, and toward my door. Behind me I could hear the footsteps, like a herd of horses, fast and hard as if galloping, and reporters calling my name. "Marlin, what about Weinberger? Marlin, when's the press conference?"

I rushed into my office and firmly closed the door behind me. I walked over to my desk, totally drained, legs weak from strain, my suit soaked from the sweat of fear and tension, and dropped into my chair.

Wallison left the White House that weekend to join a prestigious Washington law practice, and the press corps never asked about him again. This was my first experience in the eye of a Washington scandal frenzy, in which the spotlight searches every day for a new victim, and a full media cycle of newspaper articles, evening news broadcasts, and weekend talk shows will be dedicated to any face that falls in its glare. Then, in about five days, it moves on.

This is a reflexive, not contemplative, process. Wallison was a nonplayer in Iran-Contra, but he raised his head above the fog with one newspaper interview, and the media pounced on him like a leopard on sheep. □

REPORTER/EDITOR WANTED

The Washington Monthly is looking for a reporter/editor. Desirable qualifications include practical experience working in or writing about politics and government. More important are intelligence, humor, and the willingness to work long hours for low pay. Applications should be accompanied by two references and writing samples (unpublished works are fine) that demonstrate fact-gathering, writing, and analytical ability.

1611 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Not So Merry Wives of Washington

It's as hard as ever to escape the "wife of" label

BY JULIET EILPERIN

For those praying for something, anything, to come between Newt Gingrich and the presidency, September's *Vanity Fair* offered a sign from God—a big-eyed brunette from a small town in Ohio: Marianne Ginther Gingrich. "I don't want him to be president," the Speaker's wife told the magazine. And, she added, stopping him was well within her power: "It's easy ... I just go on the air the next day and I undermine everything."

If only Pat Nixon had been so bold. But Marianne Gingrich's comments were heartening for another, less partisan, reason: They were an irreverent reminder that political wives are no longer doormats for their husband's ambitions. Instead of genuflecting to tradition, she thumbed her nose at it, making it clear that she has no interest in her husband's constituents. "I like adventure," she said. "I just don't like the public."

Only 20 years ago most political wives were dutifully cutting ribbons and signing thousands of constituent Christmas cards. Now there are more and more Mariannes—women with careers and attitudes who have made leaps and bounds from a time when political wives didn't express thoughts, let alone opinions, when working was a rarity, and grinning and bearing the D.C. social circuit a must. By the 103rd Congress, the percentage of wives who worked—58 percent—paralleled the percentage of working women nationwide. Having a career is now almost as fashionable in the capital as being a graceful hostess once was.

But this trend has brought complications of its own. Marianne Gingrich, for example, has an impressive job as a vice president of marketing for an international trade company. But while she is a sharp woman, her post is not the result of years spent honing her marketing skills—the last job she held was as a cosmetics consultant. She has her position, the couple readily admitted to *Vanity Fair*'s Gail Sheehy, because the Speaker called in favors. From Sheehy, this garnered grudging admiration: "He is even trying to help her build an independent career." But doesn't Sheehy see the contradiction? Because Newt Gingrich has built his wife's career, there's nothing independent about it.

Juliet Eilperin is a staff writer for Roll Call.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marianne Gingrich is hardly alone. Many Washington wives who seem to have escaped their husbands' shadows actually owe their professional lives, or at least much of their professional success, to their husbands' positions. And if they don't quite believe this is true, they are reminded when their husbands lose their offices—or run off with someone else. Being a "wife of" does have professional benefits—the fast track to power, money, success—that other working women can only dream of. But these seeming advantages are also one reason that, in many ways, political wives' much-vaunted independence is far from complete.

Wifely Virtues

In the old Washington, men were known for what they did, but women were known by whom they had married. If a couple divorced, the woman lost her social calling card. The first wife of Johnson aide Joseph Califano, for example, was attractive, bright, popular, and, some snickered, more knowledgeable about politics than her husband. Then came the divorce. Joseph Califano remarried and has remained a prominent political figure to this day. But Trudy Califano faded fast. "I never heard anyone say they saw her again," says Coats Redmon, who was also married to a Johnson Administration official at the time.

Trudy Califano had plenty of company on the road to oblivion. Another Johnson aide, Harry McPherson, also divorced his wife, Clay, and later remarried. The first Mrs. McPherson was considered perfectly charming when they were married. But asked recently what had happened to her, a Washington journalist who had been close friends with the couple said, "Gee, I don't know," as he struggled to remember her first name. Perhaps inspired by a boss who made cheating chic, a phalanx of Kennedy staffers—Sorenson, Salinger, Schlesinger—left their wives in the sixties, and the wives dutifully disappeared from the Washington scene. Lest you think only strictly political wives suffered this fate, consider Antoinette "Tony" Bradlee, who, as the wife of *Washington Post* executive editor Ben Bradlee, was one of the princesses of Washington in the sixties. Dethroned when he divorced her and married Sally Quinn, Tony Bradlee quickly, and permanently, dropped from sight.

In another city, these women might have been considered worth keeping up with on their considerable merits, even after a divorce, but in Washington, a woman's merits were her husband's credentials. So while Washington wives bonded with each other to weather loneliness, emptiness, or rocky marriages, even those ties were as mercurial as their changing political and marital fortunes. With defeat or divorce, friendships evaporated.

Well into the seventies, meanwhile, few Washington wives had careers. They had instead a seemingly endless list of social and political duties—from charming their husbands' colleagues over martinis to impressing constituents at charity lunches. Neglected by husbands preoccupied by power, they also had to act as both mother and father to their children. When one Senator returned home unexpectedly, his wife called out "Daddy's here!" to her children. "On what channel?" they called back. The strain of raising four adolescent children while her husband traveled incessantly supposedly set Betty Ford on the road to alcoholism.

There were, of course, exceptions. Pauline Gore, for instance, was a loyal wife to her senator husband, Albert Gore, Sr. But she was also the first female graduate of YMCA Night Law School (later Vanderbilt Law School), which she attended in the thirties. While she did not formally practice when her husband was in the Senate, she remained active in the field by giving speeches and pro bono advice—she was more than a senator's wife. When Eugene McCarthy and his wife Abigail divorced, she resolved not to disappear, and instead stayed on in Washington as a successful, politically active writer. Such women were rare, but their lesson was clear: A career could give a political wife an identity of her own—and something to fall back on.

Today, political wives have invaded the executive branch, Congress, and the web of law firms, lobbying houses, public relations outfits, and nonprofits that feed off the government. Career suc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cess has become a status symbol, and wives eager for that success have found that a husband's name can be an asset, whether lobbying his colleagues (it's easier to access the still-formidable old boy network if you're married to an old boy) or traversing the more informal networks that grease real estate transactions. Some wives have managed to turn what once were tiresome political duties in support of their husbands into networking opportunities for themselves.

This is a clever turnaround, but it can also lead to abuse—Bob Packwood was certainly not the first to tread this ground. In the early eighties, Senator Mark Hatfield's wife Antoinette was a prodigiously successful real estate agent. But suspicions that it wasn't just her knack for locating the right Georgetown townhouse were confirmed when reports surfaced that Antoinette had received an impressive $55,000 to find and decorate an apartment for a Greek businessman who happened to be promoting a trans-African pipeline—for which Senator Hatfield happened to have decided to help move along with federal funding.

But usually the workings are more subtle. Judy Fazio, the wife of California Democrat Rep. Vic Fazio, lobbies for a host of groups—Motorola, Corning, the Association for Responsible Thermal Treatment—with interests before Congress (though not before any committee her husband sits on). Judy Fazio's listing in *Washington Representatives*, which lists Washington lobbyists, is instructive: Under "Background," which normally lists elected or appointed offices or past staff jobs, the description reads: "Husband is U.S. Rep. Vic Fazio." This is done in the interest of disclosure—but it's also an advertisement.

Or say you're a special interest group hoping to lure a few important congressmen to an event. The name of a certain McLean, Virginia, event-planning firm might catch your eye: Hayes, Domenici, and Nunn. That's right: One of Washington's most successful event-planning firms is run by the sister of Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) and the wives of Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) and Rep. Jimmy Hayes (D-La.). These women are certainly capable, but they don't prosper simply because they cut the best crudités in town.

During this February's Mardi Gras festival in D.C., for example, the firm put on an "Economic Development Brunch" that brought some of Louisiana's businessmen together with federal officials who had the power to help them. Why did the local chambers of commerce tap the firm? "It's a Louisiana connection," Hayes, Domenici, and Nunn's communications director Janet Straihar explained, pointing out that Hayes—and her husband—are from the state. Even non-Louisianans seek the firm out because congressional wives attend its events and frequently bring their husbands in tow.

Then there are the political wives who, proximate to so much power, decide they ought to wield some of it. Long before Hillary Clinton came to Washington, Heather Foley went to work in the office of her husband, then-Speaker Thomas Foley, as an unpaid chief of staff. Administrative aides quickly found their turf annexed by a woman whose power couldn't be challenged. And the Speaker's wife had found herself a plum job where she could influence everything from tax policy to decorating decisions in the Capitol Building.

Espousing Family Values

What's striking, though, is that despite climbing into positions of power, Washington wives remain remarkably vulnerable to ruthless social mores. "I was dropped like a hot potato," declares Marty Davis, whose husband, now-former Rep. Bob Davis (R-MI), left her for a 27-year-old (who he then added to his Merchant Marine Committee staff). Even Sen. Ernest (Fritz) Hollings' (D-NC) wife Peatsy, who is considered among the most good-hearted of D.C. spouses, forthrightly admits that if a politician divorces a friend of hers, her first loyalty won't be to her friend. "It's my husband's colleague," she explains. "Fritz has got to go to work with these people." A husband's defeat can still bring a similar fall from social grace.

But the fact that so many wives now have careers can mean they face double jeopardy: If they've hitched their professional star to their husband, an election loss or divorce can leave their career on ice, too. Take the case of Rita Gale Gilman. A 60-year-old recent law school graduate, she was looking for a job in immigration law. Though she lacked experience, she had no shortage of professional suitors. Some of Washington's top firms, in fact, were taking her to lunch because she was married to Rep. Benjamin Gilman, a 12-term congressman and the ranking Republican on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the House International Relations Committee.

When the November elections elevated her husband to chairman, Gilman stood poised to reap the social and professional rewards. One day, however, her husband stopped by the house, picked up a few items, headed off for a fact-finding trip, and made it clear that he wouldn't be returning. The Gilmans entered nasty divorce proceedings and Rita Gale Gilman entered the obscure netherworld of political ex-wives.

Overnight, she went from being a hot Washington wife to an unemployed woman staying with her family in Short Hills, New Jersey. She uses a post office box as a mailing address because she doesn't know where she'll be living next month. Where once she lunched with embassy wives and presided over important-sounding boards, she is now a persona non grata in the embassy community. Ambassadors' wives no longer return her phone calls. "They'll be nice to you as long as you're married to a congressman," says Gilman bitterly. "As soon as anything goes wrong, you're dead meat."

The law firm lunches have ended, too. She claims that one company had retained her services to curry favor with her husband, and then had the nerve to drop her right after he did. The problem with trying to parlay your husband's position into career gold, Gilman discovered, is that it works only so long as he is your husband.

What, then, is a woman seeking real independence to do? There's no easy answer—just ask Kendel Ehrlich. Her husband Robert was elected to the House last fall, and after five years as a public defender, she went looking for work in a law firm. Like Gilman, she discovered that quite a few firms showed an unnaturally active interest in her—"Some people really want you, and that might not be for the best reasons," she says dryly—but unlike Gilman, she wasn't flattered by the attention. Fearing the expectations of her if she took the jobs, she declined them—but where is she to work? Many of the women who end up in compromising positions are similarly anxious to work; they simply happen to be trying to do so in a town that remains riveted on who their husbands are. The same quandary has prompted some political wives to leave the work force, and others to leave Washington. Women in many ways remain as yoked to their husbands' names as their counterparts were three decades ago.

But getting ahead on a husband's name isn't the solution—because it binds the ties even more tightly. For someone like Marianne Gingrich, perhaps the answer is to get a job in the field where she trained and then work her way up to something bigger, or go back to school—gaining, in other words, real independence by giving up a fancy title. Like many political wives, Marianne Gingrich sacrificed a great deal for her husband to get ahead—including, as she told *Vanity Fair*, some of her earnings. But the danger of being given a career in return is that if Newt Gingrich decides tomorrow that a working wife conflicts with family values, it won't take long for him to remind her who built that career in the first place.

And such a twist is not beyond the realm of possibility. It is more and more common for Republican wives to stay at home; only about one-third of new congressmen's wives hold jobs, according to Ruthie McIntosh, president of the 104th Congressional Spouses Club. Meredith Christensen, for example, the wife of freshman Jon Christensen (R-NE), gave up work as a tax attorney after her husband was elected in order to devote more time to his career. Of course, many of the wives can afford not to work—a *Washington Post* survey reported that more than one-fourth of the freshman class are millionaires. But it's also ironic that where wives once longed for choices beyond being a "wife of," now GOP women are choosing to be exactly that.

For husbands who campaigned on family values, of course, wives in traditional roles can be a political asset. And so, they've learned, can making sure their wives never make it to Washington at all. As Newt Gingrich told the freshman orientation last January, having spouses move to Washington now is a "political liability"—voters might begin to suspect that their representative has joined the Washington power structure. And so 85 percent of the latest batch of Republican wives have stayed back in their districts. Some, it's true, don't want to relocate their young children, but mostly these spouses are acceding to political dictates.

For decades, women were dragged to Washington by ambitious husbands to play the supportive political wife. Now some are expected to play the good wife by staying away, as others try to escape their husbands' shadows by using their husbands' names. It's a funny kind of progress. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Give Them Liberty to Give Us Death?

We've come a long way from the founding fathers, baby, when cigarette companies try to pervert the First Amendment to protect their seductive advertising

BY J.M. BALKIN

It seemed like a great way to promote family values. On August 10, President Clinton announced a campaign to protect children from the dangers of smoking by severely restricting cigarette advertising on outdoor billboards, at sporting events, in magazines, and on promotional items.

Hours later, however, opponents were in court claiming that the regulations violated the First Amendment. The protests of censorship came not from political dissenters and avant-garde artists, but from some of the wealthiest corporations in the United States: Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds. Is Bill Clinton the Joe McCarthy of our times?

Hardly. The First Amendment guarantees the right to freedom of speech, but not all speech is equally protected. Securities fraud, perjury, and sexual harassment, to name three examples, get no First Amendment protection. The central types of protected speech are political and artistic speech, which promote the values of democratic culture, self-governance, personal autonomy, and self-expression. The liberty interest in commercial speech, on the other hand, is not much different from the liberty to pursue a trade or business, which is generally subject to regulation by the democratic process. The Supreme Court has held that commercial speech, or "speech which proposes a commercial transaction," receives considerably less protection. Until 1976, in fact, the Supreme Court didn't recognize its constitutional status at all.

Thus, the government can ban advertisements for the sale of heroin, but it cannot jail communists who advocate the violent overthrow of the U.S. government. False and misleading political speech is constitutionally protected, but there is no similar privilege for false or misleading advertisements. The government can even require businesses to disclose information about products that they would rather keep under wraps, if this would prevent misleading consumers. But the rules are different in politics. For better or worse, we can't sue politicians to force them to tell the whole truth.

The Supreme Court protects commercial speech because of the value in distributing true information about products to willing consumers. Ironically, most advertising, and most cigarette advertising in particular, is of a completely different character. Modern promotion of beer and cigarettes is primarily image advertising; it does not convey information

J.M. Balkin is Lafayette S. Foster professor at Yale Law School.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about a product but instead tries to associate it with something the consumer already desires, such as youth, sexual attractiveness, or popularity. Image advertising has brought us the Marlboro Man and the slogan, "You've come a long way, baby." Not surprisingly, image advertising is the most effective way to attract teenagers to smoking.

The Clinton proposals seek to reduce teen smoking by limiting the reach of this imagery. The Administration wants to ban brand-name advertising on products not related to smoking (such as T-shirts and baseball caps), and to require that all remaining outdoor tobacco advertisements be in "tombstone format"—black and white and text only. The tombstone rules also would apply to advertising in publications with a substantial youth readership, which includes youth publications like *Seventeen* and more general publications like *TV Guide*.

Because it is illegal to sell cigarettes to minors, the government can prevent advertising to minors. But can the government restrict nonmisleading advertising aimed at adults that also reaches children? The tobacco companies contend it can't. According to a 1980 decision by the Supreme Court, the test is whether there is a good enough fit between the end the government seeks and the means it selects, and whether those means are unduly restrictive.

In one case, the Court suggested that Puerto Rico could ban all casino gambling advertising aimed at its residents because it had the power to do something much more restrictive—ban casino gambling altogether—and that made less restrictive alternatives irrelevant. Applying that logic, since the government could ban cigarette manufacture entirely, it could ban all advertising of cigarettes. And if it could ban all advertising, it could certainly ban only the advertising most likely to seduce children into smoking.

More recent cases suggest that the court will be suspicious of government actions that are badly adapted to their stated ends. Last term, for example, the Court struck down a law banning advertisements of alcohol content in beer because the government's reasons were belied by the patchwork nature of the ban. Indeed, in some cases the government even *required* disclosure of alcohol content.

It's reasonable to think that reducing exposure of children to cigarette advertising, and especially image advertising, will tempt fewer children to smoke. But could the government do this in ways that don't affect adult advertising? The problem is that advertising for adults often can't be segregated so that children are not exposed to it—you can't have, say, one section of the ballpark visible only to adults and another only to kids.

The tombstone rules actually strengthen the government's case by targeting image-based ads while allowing the dissemination of truthful information about price and features—the core concern of commercial speech protection. Adults can still receive truthful information about products, and the tombstone rules don't apply at all to magazines with overwhelmingly adult readers.

Clinton's proposals would also ban tobacco advertising within 1,000 feet of schools. The tobacco companies' defenders argue that this will cut off most prime advertising space. But this seems hardly less burdensome than regulations upheld by the Supreme Court that ban adult bookstores within the vicinity of schools and churches.

Finally, the tobacco companies would be required to pay for a $150 million advertising campaign aimed at convincing the young to stop smoking. At first glance, this looks about as constitutional as asking the Ku Klux Klan to finance a course on multiculturalism. But we are dealing with commercial, not political, speech. Cigarette manufacturers already have to put a black-and-white sign on their ads—and on every pack of cigarettes—announcing that they are, in effect, selling carcinogens. We can't require Newt Gingrich to wear a sign saying "I haven't a clue what I'm talking about" when he delivers a speech on foreign policy, but we can compel retailers and manufacturers to provide warnings and additional information.

Opponents of the restrictions may object that liberals are equally opposed to censoring TV and cyberspace to protect kids. But the cases are different. First, there is no "C-chip" that would allow parents to block out every passing Joe Camel T-shirt. More importantly, the Constitution regards commercial speech as less essential to our freedom than political or artistic speech. Simply put, we shouldn't confuse the right to denounce an unjust government with the right to denounce a competitor's roll-on deodorant. We've come a long way, baby, but not that far. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How the GOP Learned to Love the Bomb

The Republicans aren't worried about nuclear terrorism. But you should be

BY AMANDA BICHSEL

The scene is Prague, whose beautiful churches and bridges were, almost miraculously, spared the ravages of two world wars. It is just before Christmas, and people are laughing and chatting on the streets as they do their last-minute shopping. Jaroslav Wagner, a retired nuclear scientist, starts the engine of his luxe blue Saab—conspicuous on this block of cheap Skodas—to make his delivery. He pulls out and speeds away. In his trunk is a metal canister, and in the canister are six pounds of highly enriched uranium, which is enough, in the hands of the right terrorists, to build a primitive nuclear weapon. Enough, that is, to ravage a city. Merry Christmas, Prague.

Sound like the latest from Ian Fleming or John Le Carre? Try the newspaper. Wagner was apprehended last December.

Unfortunately, the Wagner case is not as unusual as you might think. The demise of the Soviet Union, and the rather abrupt end of the Cold War nuclear arms race, has left the East's sprawling nuclear infrastructure in chaos. Nuclear weapons of all kinds—and the enriched uranium and plutonium used to make them—are scattered about Russia and the newly independent states, and Russia is too broke and out of control to keep tabs on them. This, declares Harvard political scientist Graham Allison, is "the number one threat to American national security today."

Welcome to the fin de siècle, where nuclear overindulgence has, indeed, made us vulnerable—and where Republicans in our own Congress are about to make a bad situation worse.

In 1991, Senators Sam Nunn, a Democrat, and Richard Lugar, a Republican, joined forces to deal with the Cold War's dangerous legacy. The "Nunn-Lugar" program, which began the next year, was designed to help dismantle nuclear weapons pointed at the U.S., and to help safeguard and account for leftover nuclear materials. So far in the former Soviet Union, with this American help, more than 2,800 nuclear warheads have been deactivated, 630 strategic launchers and bombers have been eliminated, and over 1,000 strategic Russian warheads that could be aimed at the U.S. are no longer deployed. Using

Amanda Bichsel is a Russia analyst for a foreign policy and defense consulting firm based in Washington, D.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nunn-Lugar assistance, Russia will also fulfill its obligations under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) two years ahead of schedule, paving the way for further reductions. And do you remember when Ukraine refused to give up its nuclear weapons? Nunn-Lugar was critical in convincing Ukraine's leaders (as well as those of Kazakhstan and Belarus) to hand their weapons over to the Russians and promise not to build their own. All this for less then $400 million per year, less than two-tenths of 1 percent of the total defense budget.

But House Republicans, who plan to increase Pentagon spending by something approaching $10 billion this fiscal year, want to kill Nunn-Lugar. In February, $20 million was cut back from the program and the latest spending bill threatens to freeze all of its funding. While useless weapons systems are kept in production, this country is abandoning a crucial strategy for defending itself in the new world disorder: The threat today is less that Russia will invade Germany, but that the next Jaroslav Wagner might not be stopped—and that Prague '94 could just as easily be New York City '96.

Cleaning Up the Mess

The Cold War threw the two superpowers headlong into an arms race that would last almost 50 years, cost over $4 trillion in the U.S. alone, and leave both Russia and the U.S. with enormous nuclear weapons stockpiles. At last count, Russia had 25,000 weapons, while the U.S. weighed in at 14,000.

The problem now is what to do with them. Russia and the U.S. are dismantling their weapons at the rate of about 2,000 a year. But after the delivery system—the missile, or bomb, or whatever—has been demolished, the radioactive core of the weapon is still there. This highly enriched uranium or plutonium (known as "fissile material") cannot be easily destroyed. But it also can't be abandoned. The most difficult part of building a nuclear weapon, you see, is not putting the components together, but producing this fissile material, the bomb's crucial ingredient. It's a terrorist's dream to find this stuff ready-made—and all that is needed is a few pounds.

Meanwhile, Russia is sitting on at least 170 *tons* of plutonium and 1,200 *tons* of highly enriched uranium. The Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (Minatom) has no idea how much fissile material was produced or is currently held in the former Soviet Union today. In February, one production center of weapons-grade plutonium reported that several hundred kilograms of plutonium were "lost."

This stuff could destroy the world many times over. But too much of it—of the material that can be located, anyway—is guarded less vigilantly than the average convenience store. Once weapons are dismantled, their parts are taken by rail through 11 time zones with hundreds of stops. If and when the material does reach its intended destination, it is stored in facilities that would make your junior high locker room look like maximum security lock-up—guarded by demoralized soldiers, or research scientists who have families to feed. Even though Kazakhstan, Belarus and Ukraine have given up their nuclear weapons, stores of plutonium and uranium are still being discovered.

In the last three years, there have been at least five serious cases of diversion of weapons-usable plutonium and uranium—all widely reported in the press. The details are spine-chilling. In May 1993, 33 crates containing highly enriched uranium mixed with a metal substance were discovered in a bank vault in Vilnius, Lithuania. Apparently, the material was intercepted by a company called AMI (basically, a front company for two mafia middlemen) in the Russian region of Sverdlovsk as it was being shipped from a physics institute in Obninsk. From there it was transported to an organized crime group in Lithuania. Its final destination: the Middle East.

The amount of uranium in this bust wasn't enough to construct a bomb. But there's no reason to think that the same underground railroad couldn't be used for larger packages. Remember, it only takes a few pounds of the stuff. And the cast of characters in the Vilnius case should make you worry: It included at least one senior regional Russian government official, a senior official at a notoriously unsafe nuclear storage facility, an organiza-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion with apparent links to the KGB and mafia groups, and, very likely, an arms merchant tied to Middle East states and terrorist organizations.

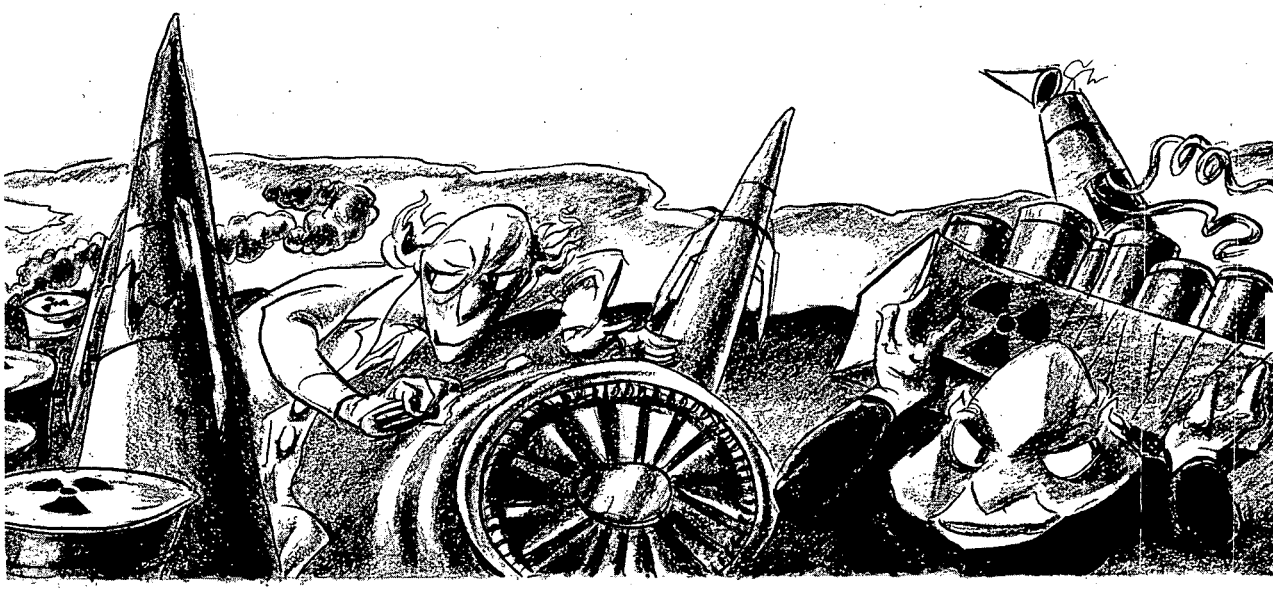
It's not hard to figure out why Russia needs help locking up and keeping tabs on this dangerous material. In its transition to a market economy, the government finds itself unable to pay its salaries or fund law enforcement. In 1993, for example, four kilograms of enriched uranium were stolen from a naval shipyard near Murmansk. Second class captain Alexei Tikhomirov, driven by despair and poverty, managed to break through the wooden fence, saw off the padlock on the warehouse door, lift the lid of a container, and break off three pieces of a nuclear reactor core. Mikhail Kulik, the chief Russian investigator of the theft, wasn't surprised. He recounted this tale in an interview with Russia's monthly *Yaderny Kontrol*. "Potatoes," he commented, "are better guarded."

Put simply, Russia needs our help—and with our own national security at stake, we need Russia to accept it. Under funds provided by Nunn-Lugar, the Pentagon has worked closely with the Russian Ministry of Defense to help ensure that nuclear materials get where they are going safely—and then stay there. Nunn-Lugar pays for secure rail cars, weapons supercontainers, and armored blankets to safely transport fissile materials. The program is also contributing to a secure storage facility, special theft-proof fissile material canisters to put inside, and emergency response equipment for unforeseen disasters along the way.

For a vivid example of the benefits of Nunn-Lugar, consider the case of the Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy in Moscow. When a Department of Energy official visited the site, he found 160 pounds of weapons-grade uranium stored in high-school style lockers and secured by a tiny chain looped through the handles. Kurchatov, with its crumbling walls and lack of inventory control system, posed the greatest risk of nuclear theft in the former Soviet Union.

With Nunn-Lugar funds, the Russians, using American technology, built a new fence around Kurchatov's Building 116, which houses two test reactors and 75 kilos of fissile material. The fence is now armed with microwave sensors, alarms, and cameras; at the opening is a nuclear materials detector. And in April, a six-month experimental program was launched at Kurchatov: Remote sensors and video cameras were installed in storage vaults containing highly enriched uranium, and similar equipment was placed in the Argonne-West lab in Idaho. Both nations are now able to monitor each other's nuclear sites. Similar security improvements at Russian research labs, institutes, and plants have been helped with $20 million in Nunn-Lugar funds. Would we prefer to pay—perhaps in lives—for the consequences of not securing these places?

Nunn-Lugar has also provided a comprehensive demilitarization strategy for the former Soviet Union, sending bulldozers, cranes, electric drills, saws, cable shredders, plasma cutters, and giant shears to hack apart weapons, missile silos and launch pads. American Nunn-Lugar funds are also



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

being used to destroy Russia's chemical weapons stockpiles (estimated at between 40,000 and 200,000 tons), by assisting with the design and construction of a chemical weapons destruction facility in Shchuchie, Russia.

Sometimes the work is even more dramatic. Last November, Americans led "Project Sapphire," a top-secret operation in Kazakhstan that retrieved 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium—enough to make several dozen nuclear weapons—and moved it to the Oak Ridge facility in Tennessee, where black marketeers, terrorists and rogue states like Iran can't touch it. According to Secretary of Defense William Perry, "without our cooperation with Kazakhstan on Nunn-Lugar, we might never have known about the existence of this material."

Nunn-Lugar funding also helps ease the dismantling of the giant Russian military-industrial complex—granting seed money, for example, to U.S. companies that help convert weapons industries in Russia to consumer manufacturing, making dental equipment, hearing aids, and cola bottling equipment. Because it is illegal in these countries to decommission a military officer unless he is provided housing, Nunn-Lugar has also helped to convert a Soviet missile factory into one that produces materials for apartment complexes.

Time Bomb

Senators Nunn and Lugar were visionaries. When they first developed their plan in 1991, the new threats of the former Soviet Union were only just beginning to appear. Now the picture is much clearer. The only thing stopping, say, North Korea or Iraq from building bombs is the difficulty of obtaining fissile material, and recent reports show Iraq much further along in its program than had been thought.

More should be done, not less, to ensure that Russia does not open shop (either intentionally or by neglect) for the materials to complete these projects. It is also becoming clear that the nuclear threat now is not just from the Saddaam Husseins of the world, but from the Timothy McVeighs and Aum Shinrikyos.

In such a dangerous world, the Republicans are showing remarkable narrow-mindedness in cutting Nunn-Lugar. To justify this move, they are linking Nunn-Lugar to Russian behavior on other fronts. The General Accounting Office, for example, has suggested that some scientists at Moscow's International Science and Technology Center (funded in part by the U.S.) are still working at their old jobs in biological weapons research. But the fact remains that every scientist employed by the Center is one more we can keep track of, and one less recruit for the world's nuclear wannabes. And the wannabes don't fool around: By last fall, Iraq, Iran, India, and Pakistan, among others, had set up trade offices in Moscow to solicit Russian research laboratories to work on their nuclear programs.

To be sure, Republicans ought to move toward enforcing the international ban on biological weapons. But where is the logic in "punishing"

Victor Vaccaro

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Russia by slowing its nuclear disarmament?

The Republicans also take issue with the "non-defense" activities of Nunn-Lugar—presumably anything outside the realm of weapon-smashing. But the Russian government is faced with the choice of paying our captain Alexei's salary (often months late) or beefing up the shipyard security system. A tough choice for a country with a fragile social compact. Helping with conversion and housing goes a long way towards girding this compact. For if it falls apart, we're in real trouble. "If we focus just on destroying weapons and ignore the people and facilities," Secretary Perry has said, "the Soviet nuclear Hydra could turn around and grow new warheads."

In 1995, then, the imperative for Nunn-Lugar funding is stronger, not weaker, than it was four years ago. But when Representative Bob Dornan moved to freeze Nunn-Lugar funding, the House approved the motion 244 to 180. Dornan, raving about tax dollars being spent in what remains of the "Evil Empire," seems lost in this new and complex world. He and his ilk fail to understand that $400 million to help remove the twentieth century's biggest threat is a paltry sum, indeed, especially considering the $4 trillion the U.S. spent perfecting it.

Meanwhile, Republicans want to spend half a billion dollars for a B-2 Stealth bomber that the Pentagon doesn't want and $1.4 billion for a third Seawolf nuclear submarine that defense analysts say the country does not need. They are even pushing to continue the $35 billion "Star Wars" missile defense program. Even if Star Wars did work—which is unlikely—it would not stop terrorists from smuggling a nuclear weapon into New York harbor. It is the suitcase from Almaty or Tehran, not the ICBM launched from China or Russia, that should worry us most.

So consider another scene: Your breakfast table, in the not-too-distant future. You are reading the morning paper over your cereal. The lead story: Some lunatic has stolen a cola can-sized amount of plutonium—more than enough to make a massively destructive nuclear weapon—from a Russian nuclear storage facility and is now running around Libya, screaming holy war at the United States. For now, it's the stuff of Fleming and Le Carre.

Let's keep it that way. □

Who's Who

The New Republic's **Matthew Cooper**, an alumnus of this magazine, was the first White House correspondent, while he was still with *U.S. News and World Report*, to perceive the rising influence of political guru **Dick Morris**. Cooper's latest bulletin is that Morris is behind a new **Bill Clinton** policy called triangulation in which the President equidistances himself from both Democrats and Republicans. Cooper adds: "Call it flattery—or sucking up—but White House aides now unselfconsciously mimic Morris' habit of explaining triangulation with his hands."...

The competition must have been keen, we thought, when we heard Knight-Ridder was choosing the worst congressman. It turned out that the choice was so difficult that the best they could do was name a "serious contender" for the honor. She is Representative **Barbara-Rose Collins** of Detroit. She has the third worst attendance record, behind only one member who had a liver transplant and another who was on trial for statutory rape. She originated just one law in five years on the Hill—to rename the courthouse in Detroit. At least 20 of her aides have departed since last year, including a press secretary she fired because she thought he had AIDS. According to *The Hill*, she used one staffer as her personal maid "to regularly clean [her] home."...

As a young man, National Security Advisor **Tony Lake** displayed a gift for candor with his draft board that rivals that of his boss, Bill Clinton. According to **Jason DeParle** of *The New York Times*, Lake told his board that he would like to be deferred because he was learning Vietnamese for a State Department job. A somewhat skeptical board member asked him to count to 10 in Vietnamese. Lake didn't want to reveal that his language training had not started, so he counted to 10 in Chinese, an Asian language he did know, and got the deferment. In contrast to his boss, however, Lake did go to Vietnam, even though it was as a civilian....

Sometimes the effort to live a life that is beyond reproach requires an ability to make subtle distinctions. Take **Newt Gingrich** who, according to a former female friend quoted by **Gail Sheehy** in *Vanity*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Newt's nuance... Boutros-Ghali's mirror ... Dick Morris's triangle...

Fair, liked oral sex "because then he can say, 'I never slept with her.'"...

Bill and **Hillary Clinton**'s defense fund has paid out $491,134 in legal fees and still owes $918,987 to Williams & Connolly, and $680,311 to Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher, and Flom. One wonders what the fee would be if they had actually been indicted for a crime?...

If you want to know why you don't hear **Paul Begala**'s name mentioned anymore as one of Bill Clinton's political advisors, it may have something to do with the fact that he called White House Chief of Staff **Leon Panetta** "the poster boy for economic constipation."...

Stanley Meisler, a veteran foreign correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times* has written an illuminating new book, *United Nations: The First 50 Years*. You may not believe that I take books about the U.N. to bed at night, but this one is actually a lively read. Meisler seems to have the right take on Secretary General **Boutros Boutros-Ghali**, explaining Boutros-Ghali's loner-tendencies—"There is a joke that whenever the Secretary General wants to look for someone he can trust, he stands up on his two feet, walks across the room to the wall, and looks into the mirror"—by tracing his background as a Coptic Christian trying to survive in Moslem Egypt. Meisler's understanding of Boutros-Ghali may have something to do with the fact that both are fluent in French, and that Boutros-Ghali is not at all comfortable in English, which is the only language most of the other American U.N. correspondents are familiar with....

Who will replace departing White House Deputy Chief of Staff **Erskine Bowles**? Possible successors: Deputy Press Secretary **Evelyn Lieberman**, or a dark horse candidate, FCC Chairman **Reed Hundt.**

Viewers of ABC's "World News Tonight" may be wondering why **Richard Holbrooke** has not been named the "Person of the Week," an award doled out each Friday by anchor **Peter Jennings.** Could it be because Holbrooke is now married to **Kati Marton,** Jennings's ex-wife? We suspect that **Micheal Eisner** and the other big boys at Disney/Capital Cities would not want the award handed off with the phrase "and so we choose ... the man who is sleeping with my former Mrs."...

Governor **Mike Lowry** of Washington has agreed to pay $975,000 in an out of court settlement of sexual harassment charges leveled by his former spokesperson, **Susanne Albright**, who accused him of persistent groping and lewd remarks. In an article she wrote for *The Washington Post*, Albright recently described her reaction to the experience, in words that might well be pondered by you bosses out there who just don't get why subordinates are not always flattered by sexual advances: "I began to question everything about myself. Did I get the job because I was qualified? Was I worthy of the position? Or was I hired simply because the governor liked to touch me and look at me?"...

Ever wonder what a "wedge issue" is? The definitive explanation has been provided by Governor **Pete Wilson** of California (thanks to *The Washington Times* for the quote): "Wedge issues are issues that people want to ignore that are real problems. Typically they're liberals, but in this case they're Republicans who may have picked up, for reasons that relate to their own interests, on a charge made by liberals who don't want to recognize a real problem, who want to ignore it. That's what a wedge issue is." Well, that certainly clears things up....

—*Susan Threadgill*

Roman Genn

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why You Can Hate Drugs and Still Want to Legalize Them

We can't give up fighting abuse and addiction. But prohibition does far more harm than good

BY JOSHUA WOLF SHENK

There's no breeze, only bare, stifling heat, but Kevin can scarcely support his wispy frame. He bobs forward, his eyes slowly closing until he drifts asleep, in a 45-degree hunch. "Kevin?" I say softly. He jerks awake and slowly rubs a hand over his spindly chest. "It's so hot in here I can hardly think," he says.

Kevin is wearing an "Americorps" baseball cap, and I ask him where he got it. The lids close over his glassy eyes and then open again, showing a look of gentle, but deep confusion. He removes the hat, revealing hair the tone of a red shirt that's been through the washer a thousand times. He blinks again and glances at the cap. He has no idea.

This July, I spent a long, hot day talking to junkies in New York City, in a run-down hotel near Columbia University. Some, like Kevin, were reticent. Others spoke freely about their lives and addictions. I sat with Melissa for 20 minutes as she patiently hunted her needle-scarred legs for a vein to take a spike. She had just fixed after a long dry spell. "I was sick," she told me. "I could hardly move. And Papo"—she gestures toward a friend sitting across from her—"he helped me out. He gave me something to make me better."

To most Americans, addicts like Kevin and Melissa and Papo are not people, but arguments. Some victims of drug use inspire sympathy, or irritation, or just plain worry. But it is the junkies—seemingly bereft of humanity, subsisting in what one former addict calls "soul-death"—who justify our national attitude toward certain drugs: that they should be illegal, unavailable, and totally suppressed.

But this country has another drug problem, one with its own tragic stories. In 1993, Launice Smith was killed in a shoot-out between rival drug dealers at a football game at an elementary school in Washington, D.C. There were four other murder victims in the same neighborhood that day. Launice stood out, though, because she was only four years old.

Addicts suffer from illegal drugs. But each year hundreds of children like Launice are killed *because* drugs are illegal. It's difficult, but crucial, to understand this distinction. By turning popular drugs into illegal contraband, prohibition sparks tremendous inflation. Small amounts of plant leaves and powder that cost only pennies to grow and process sell for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hundreds of dollars on the street. All told, the black market in this country takes in $50 to $60 billion in income each year. In lawful society, such a large industry would be regulated by rules and enforcement mechanisms. But the intense competition of the black market is regulated only by violence. Rival entrepreneurs don't go to the courts with a dispute. They shoot it out in the street.

The black market now holds entire communities in its grip. In addition to the violence—and crime driven by addicts supporting expensive habits—the fast cash of dealing lures many young people away from school, into the drug trade, and often onto a track toward jail or death.

We are caught, then, between the Kevins and the Launices, between the horror of drug abuse and the horror of the illegal drug trade. Making drugs legally available, with tight regulatory controls, would end the black market, and with it much of the violence, crime, and social pathology we have come to understand as "drug-related." And yet, history shows clearly that lifting prohibition would allow for more drug use, and more abuse and addiction.

I spent that day in New York to face this excruciating dilemma. It's easy to call for an end to prohibition from an office in Washington, D.C. What about when looking into Kevin's dim eyes, or confronting the images of crack babies, shriveled and wincing?

The choice between two intensely unpleasant options is never easy. But, considering this problem in all its depth and complexity, it becomes clear that drug prohibition does more harm than good. We can't discount the problem of drug abuse (and that includes the abuse of legal drugs). But prohibition didn't keep Kevin from becoming an addict in the first place, and it certainly isn't helping him stop. High prices for drugs do discourage some would-be users, though far fewer than the government would like. The fact is we have done a very poor job discouraging drug use with the blunt force of law. The hundreds of billions of dollars spent on drug control in the last several decades have yielded only a moderate decline in the casual use of marijuana and cocaine. But there has been no decrease in hard-core addiction. The total amount of cocaine consumed per capita has actually risen. And even casual use is now creeping up.

Government does have a responsibility to limit the individual and social costs of drug use, but such efforts must be balanced against the harm they cause. And ending the drug war needn't mean a surrender to addiction, or an affirmation of reckless drug use. President Clinton's stance on cigarette addiction—that cigarettes can be both legal and tightly regulated, particularly with respect to advertising aimed at children—points to a middle ground. Potentially, we could do a *better* job of fighting drug abuse, while avoiding the vicious side-effects of an outright ban.

Comparing the Costs

Unfortunately, this country's discussion of "the drug problem" is marked by little clear analysis and much misinformation. Politicians and bureaucrats minimize or entirely ignore the consequences of prohibition. At the other extreme, libertarians call for government to withdraw from regulating intoxicants entirely. The press, meanwhile, does little to illuminate the costs and benefits of the current prohibition or our many other policy options. "We don't cover drug policy, except episodically as a cops and robbers story," says Max Frankel, the recently retired executive editor of *The New York Times*. He calls his paper's coverage of the subject "one of my failures there as an editor, and a failure of newspapers generally."

It's not that the consequences of prohibition can't be seen in the newspapers. In the *Times* last December, for example, Isabel Wilkerson wrote a stirring profile of Jovan Rogers, a Chicago crack dealer who entered the trade when he was 14 and ended up crippled by gunshot wounds. But Wilkerson, as reporters usually do, conveyed the impression that the pathology of the black market is unfortunate, but inevitable—not the result of policies that we can change.

In fact, Rogers' story is a vivid display of the lethal drug trade that prohibition creates, the temptation of bright young men, and the cycle of destruction that soon follows.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For his first job, Rogers got $75 a day to watch out for the police. Soon, he was earning thousands a day. And though Rogers said he began dealing to support his family—"If there's nothing to eat at night," he asked, "who's going to go buy something to make sure something is there? I was the only man in the house"—the big bucks also seized him where, like most teenagers, he was most vulnerable. "If you sell drugs, you had anything you wanted," he said. "Any girl, any friend, money, status. If you didn't, you got no girlfriend, no friends, no money. You're a nothing."

This story is all too common. In communities where two-thirds of the youth lack the schooling or skills to get a decent job, drug dealing is both lucrative and glamorous. Rich dealers are role models and images of entrepreneurial success—the Bill Gateses of the inner city. Unlike straight jobs, though, dealing drugs means entering a world of gruesome violence. Like all initiates, Rogers was issued a gun, and learned quickly to shoot—to discipline other dealers in the gang or to battle rival gangs for control over a corner or neighborhood. Sometimes he would shoot blindly, out of raw fear. Newspapers report stories of "drug-related" murder. But drug *war* murder is more like it. The illegal drug trade is the country's leading cause of death by homicide—and the illegal drug trade wouldn't exist without prohibition.

Although it is popular these days to blame welfare for undermining the work ethic, often overlooked is the role played by the black market's twisted incentives, which lure men away from school and legitimate work—and, often, away from their families. In a recent two-page spread, *The Washington Post* celebrated successful students at the city's Eastern High School. Of the 76 students pictured, 64 were women—only 12 were men. The school's principal, Ralph Neal, acknowledges the role of the drug trade with a sigh, calling it a "tremendous temptation."

Writ large, the black market eventually consumes entire neighborhoods. At one time, the area of Philadelphia now referred to as "Badlands" was peppered with factories, mom-and-pop grocery stores, taverns, and theaters. Now drug dealers are positioned on street corners and in flashy cars, poised to fire their guns at the slightest provocation. Crack vials and dirty needles line the streets. Often, customers drive through in BMWs with New Jersey plates, making their buys and then scurrying back to the suburbs.

Of course, impoverished communities like this one have more troubles than just drug prohibition. But it is the black market, residents will tell you, that is a noose around their neck. Drive-by shootings and deadly stray bullets are bad enough, but some of the most devastating casualties are indirect ones. This summer two children suffocated while playing in an abandoned car in Southeast Washington. The kids avoided local playgrounds, one child said, because they feared "bullies and drug dealers."

"Kids in the inner city are scared to go to school," says Philippe Bourgois, a scholar who recently spent three and a half years with drug dealers in East Harlem writing *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. "You're going to pass five or six dealers hawking vials of crack on your way there. You face getting mugged in the hallway. The dealers ... they drop out, but they don't stop going to school—that's where the action is."

A D.C. public school teacher told me that 13-year-old dealers, already fully initiated into the drug culture, crawl through a hole in the fence around her school's playground to talk to fifth and sixth graders. Once, after she and a security guard chased them off, a group of young dealers found her in the school's parking lot. "There's that snitching bitch," one kid said. "That's the bitch that snitched. I'm going to kill you, you snitching bitch." The drug war's Dr. Seuss.

A Nation Behind Bars

The high prices caused by prohibition drive crime in another way: Addicts need cash to feed their habits. The junkies I met in New York told me they would spend between $200 and $600 a week for drugs. Melissa, for example, once had a good job and made enough to pay her bills and to buy dope. Then she got laid off and turned to prostitution to support her habit. Others steal to pay for their drugs—from liquor stores, from their families, from dealers, or from other addicts. According to a study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, one out of every three thefts are committed by people seeking drug money.

This crime wave does not restrict itself to the inner cities. Addicts seeking money to get a fix are very fond of the fine appliances and cash-filled wallets found in wealthier neighborhoods. Subur-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ban high schools may not have swarms of dealers crawling through the fences, but dealers are there too. In fact, the suburbs are increasingly popular for dealers looking to take up residence.

Quite apart from the costs of the black market—the crime, the neighborhoods and lives ruined—Americans also pay a heavy price for the drug war itself. For fiscal 1996, Clinton has requested $14.6 billion for drug control (up from only $1.3 billion in 1983). State and local governments spend about twice that each year.

If you sold drugs, one dealer explained, "you had anything you wanted. Any girl, any friend, money, status. If you didn't, you got no girlfriend, no friends, no money, nothing."

But these budgets reflect only a small portion of the costs. In 1980, the United States had 330,000 people in jail; today, it's well over a million, and drug offenders account for 46 percent of that increase. On top of the cost of building prisons, it takes more than $30,000 per year to keep someone in jail. Naturally, prison spending has exploded. The country now spends nearly $30 billion annually on corrections. Between 1970 and 1990, state and local governments hiked prison spending by 232 percent.

Even worse, thanks to mandatory minimum sentences, the system is overloaded with non-violent drug users and dealers, who now often receive harsher penalties than murderers, rapists, and serious white collar criminals. Solicited by an undercover DEA agent to find a cocaine supplier, Gary Fannon facilitated the deal and received a sentence of life without parole. Larry Singleton raped a teenager, hacked off her arms between the wrist and elbow, and left her for dead in the desert. He received the 14-year maximum sentence and served only eight years. This disparity is not the exception in modern law enforcement. It is the rule. Non-violent drug offenders receive an average 60 months in jail time, *five times* the average 12-month-sentence for manslaughter convicts.

Some people may say: Build more jails. In an era of tax cuts and fiscal freezes, though, every dollar spent on corrections comes from roads, or health care, or education. Even with the huge growth in prison spending, three-fourths of all state prisons were operating over their maximum capacity in 1992. Even conservatives like Michael Quinlan, director of the federal Bureau of Prisons under Reagan and Bush, have had enough of this insanity. "They're locking up a lot of people who are not serious or violent offenders," he says. "That ... brings serious consequences in terms of our ability to incarcerate truly violent criminals."

If sticking a drug dealer in jail meant fewer dealers on the street, perhaps this wave of incarceration would eventually do some good. But it doesn't work like that: Lock up a murderer, and you have one less murderer on the street. Lock up a dealer, and you create a job opening. It's like jailing an IBM executive; the pay is good, the job is appealing, so someone will move into the office before long. Clearing dealers from one neighborhood only means they'll move to another. Busting a drug ring only makes room for a competitor. "We put millions of drug offenders through the courts—and we have more people in jail per capita than any country except Russia—but we're not affecting the drug trade, let alone drug use," says Robert Sweet, U.S. district judge in the Southern district of New York.

"It's perfectly obvious," Sweet says, "that if you took the money spent housing drug offenders and enforcing the drug laws, and apply it to straight law enforcement, the results would be very impressive." Indeed, what politicians ignore is all too clear to judges, prosecutors, and cops. "The drug war can't be won," says Joseph McNamara, the former chief of police in Kansas City and San Jose, who also spent 10 years on the New York City force. "Any cop will tell you that."

What makes it even tougher for law enforcement is the pervasiveness of corruption spawned by the black market in drugs. In May 1992, New York City police uncovered the largest corruption scandal in the department's 146-year history, most of it, according to the commission that investigated it, involving "groups of officers ... identifying drug sites; planning raids; forcibly entering and looting drug trafficking locations, and sharing proceeds." There have been similar stories recently in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New Orleans, and Atlanta. Sadly, in movies like *The Bad Lieutenant,* art is imitating life. Cops shake down dealers, steal their cash, and sometimes deal the drugs them-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

selves. Or they take bribes to protect dealers from arrest.

Despite these drug war casualties—and the dismal progress in stemming drug use—each year the war intensifies. Politicians from Newt Gingrich to Bill Bradley now push for expanding the death penalty for dealers. But experience shows that the deterrent effect will be negligible. "There is no evidence that increasing penalties for drug dealing deters people from doing it," says Quinlan. "It just doesn't work like that—not when your chances of getting caught are so low, and the profits are so high." As Quinlan points out, the D.E.A. and White House count it as a success if drug prices are driven up, but that only makes the problem worse. On the streets, meanwhile, we have the worst of both worlds: Drugs are expensive enough to fuel a deadly black market, but people still buy them.

Illegal drugs, left unregulated, are also much more dangerous than they need to be. Imagine drinking whisky with no idea of its potency. It could be 30 proof or 190 proof—or diluted with a dangerous chemical. One addict I met, Mary, had blood-red sores running up her arms—from cocaine cut with meat tenderizer. Virtually all "overdose" deaths from the use of illegal drugs are due to contaminants or the user's ignorance of the drug's potency. "Just deserts," one might say. But isn't the basis of our drug policy supposed to be concern for people's health and well-being?

Unfortunately, this country's leaders have lost sight of that principle. "Policies," Thomas Sowell has written, "are judged by their consequences, but crusades are judged by how good they make the crusaders feel." Drug prohibition is very much of a crusade, discussed in moral terms, supported on faith, not evidence. The DEA stages high-profile drug raids—covered dutifully in newspapers and magazines—but is never able to limit supply. The government sends troops to burn poppy in South America and stubbornly insists, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that interdiction can make a real difference in keeping drugs out of the country.

Meanwhile, drug treatment—no panacea, but certainly more effective in limiting drug use than law enforcement or interdiction—is continually underfunded. Candidate Clinton promised "treatment on demand" in 1992, but President Clinton has not delivered. Like Reagan and Bush, he has spent about two-thirds of the anti-drug budget on law enforcement and interdiction.

For a real blood boiler, consider the case of pregnant women addicted to drugs. Lee Brown, White House director of drug policy control, often talks of visiting crack babies in the hospital to shame those who would liberalize drug laws. But, like many addicts, pregnant women often avoid treatment or health care because they fear arrest.

Although it's hard to believe, those who do seek help—for themselves and their unborn children—are often turned away. David Condliffe, who was the director of drug policy for New York City in the late eighties, conducted a survey that found that 85 percent of poor, pregnant crack addicts looking for treatment were refused everywhere they tried. Nationwide, treatment is available for only 10 percent of the 300,000 pregnant women who abuse illegal drugs. This is perhaps the greatest moral horror of our current policy—and it should shame everyone from President Clinton on down.

Beyond the Crusade

Regardless of your stance on drug policy, there can be no disagreement that we must demand honesty from public officials on this subject. Forget for a moment reporters' nonfeasance in covering the nuances of drug policy. When it comes to the drug war, they're also failing to expose coverups and outright lies.

As just one example, consider the case of needle exchange. Forty percent of new AIDS cases reported in 1992 (24,000 in total) came from infection through use of dirty needles. But the federal government continues to ban the use of AIDS-prevention funds for programs that replace dirty needles with clean ones.

This despite the fact that in 1994 the Centers for Disease Control issued a report concluding that needle exchange *does not* encourage heroin use, but *does* dramatically reduce HIV transmission. The report explicitly recommends that the federal ban be lifted. The Clinton Administration suppressed the report, but a copy finally leaked. Now, officials deny its basic finding. "[The CDC] pointed out that the jury is still out on needle exchange," Lee Brown told me. Either he hasn't read the report, or he is lying.

Even more infuriating, supporters of the drug

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war insist on confusing the harms of drug use with the harms of prohibition. William Bennett, for example, cites "murder and mayhem being committed on our cities' streets" as justification to intensify the drug war, when, as Milton Friedman wrote in an open letter to Bennett, "the very measures you favor are a major source of the evils you deplore." Meanwhile, in the current political climate, the likes of Joycelyn Elders—who merely suggested we *study* the link between prohibition and violence—are shouted down.

We need to be honest about the costs of prohibition *and* the costs of drug abuse. Then compare the two.

Facing Drug Abuse

Cocaine can cause heart attacks in people prone to irregular heartbeats, such as basketball star Len Bias, and seizures in people with mild epilepsy; it's even more dangerous mixed with alcohol and other drugs. Heroin can lead to intense physical dependence—withdrawal symptoms include nausea, convulsions, and loss of bowel control. Even marijuana can be psychologically addictive; smoking too much dope can lead to respiratory problems or even cancer.

Illegal drugs have social costs as well. Consistent intoxication—whether it's a gram-a-day coke fiend, or a regular pot smoker with a miserable memory—can mean lost productivity, increased accidents, and fractured relationships.

And addiction ... well, it's not pretty. Coke addicts often suffer acute depression without a fix. Heroin is even worse. David Morrison, recalling his furious struggle with heroin addiction in *Washington City Paper*, describes the misery of waiting for his dealer: "If sweet oblivion is the initial carrot, savage withdrawal is the enduring stick. In time, the dope fiend is not so much chasing a high as fleeing a debacle."

Given the terrible consequences of drug abuse, any reasonable person is bound to object: How could we even consider making drugs generally available? But have you asked why alcohol and tobacco are kept generally available?

Tobacco products—linked to cancer of the lungs, throat, larynx, and ovaries—cause 30 percent of all cancer deaths. Even more tobacco-related deaths come from heart attacks and strokes. Every year 435,000 Americans die premature deaths because of cigarettes. And, of course, nicotine is extremely addictive: The Surgeon General has found that the "capture" rate—the percentage of people who become addicted after trying it—is higher with cigarettes than any other drug, legal or illegal. Most nicotine addicts are hooked before age 18.

Alcohol is even more destructive. Extensive drinking often results in bleeding ulcers, cirrhosis of the liver, stomach and intestinal inflammation, and muscle damage as well as severe damage to the brain and nervous system, manifested by blackouts and psychotic episodes.

As for social costs, alcohol is the most likely of all mind-altering substances to induce criminal behavior, according to the National Institute of Justice. Close to 11 million Americans are alcoholics, and another 7 million are alcohol abusers—meaning they've screwed up at work, been in an accident, or been arrested because of drinking. Drunk driving is the cause of a third of all traffic fatalities. Alcohol-related problems affect one out of every four American homes, and alcoholism is involved in 60 percent of all murders and 38 percent of child abuse cases. These statistics only confirm our everyday experience. Who doesn't know of a family shattered by an alcoholic, or someone who has suffered with an alcoholic boss?

The reason that alcohol and tobacco are legal, despite the damage they do, is that prohibition would be even worse. In the case of alcohol, we know from experience. The prohibition from 1919 to 1933 is now synonymous with violence, organized crime, and corruption. Financed by huge profits from bootlegging, gangsters like Al Capone terrorized cities and eluded the best efforts of law enforcement. It soon became too much.

After prohibition's repeal, consumption rates for alcohol did in fact rise. But as anyone who was alive in 1933 could tell you, the increase was hardly an explosion. And it seems likely that the rise was fueled by advertising and the movies. Drunks were likeable (bit-player Jack Norton played the amiable falling-down drunk in scores of movies of that era) or even glamorous (like William Powell in *The Thin Man* films). It took years for government, the media, and entertainers to realize their responsibility to push temperance—and even now they're not doing all they can.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Just Saying "No" to the Sick and Suffering

Bill Anderson's "coat of many medicines" is his form of protest. Twelve prescription bottles are strung on a wire that fits over the neck and nine strands containing hundreds of bottles stretch from the wire down to the floor. Anexsia. Hydrocodone. Marinol. Percocet. Percodan. Vicodin.

Bill was hit by a drunk driver in 1985 and left with permanent "closed head syndrome." He gets nasty headaches—"like my head is going to explode," he says—and is afflicted by a host of other symptoms. Doctors have prescribed him every medicine under the sun—except the one that works.

"The only thing that really helps is cannabis," Bill told me after a recent conference on marijuana in Washington, D.C. "If it wasn't for this here,"—he gestures to a small pipe in his left hand—"I'd be bedridden right now."

Anderson is one of many thousands of Americans who insist that marijuana is a remarkably effective treatment for pain, muscle spasms, skin rashes and inflammations, and seizures. Marijuana is also the best known way to counteract the intense nausea that is a frequent, and devastating, side effect of cancer chemotherapy. In a 1991 Harvard study, more than half the oncologists surveyed said they'd prescribe marijuana if allowed.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, the Drug Enforcement Administration classifies marijuana as a Schedule I substance, the tightest restriction possible, which means that the federal government considers marijuana a drug with the highest potential for abuse and *no* medical uses. Doctors can't prescribe it; patients aren't supposed to smoke it.

Researchers, in fact, can't even study it. Federal authorities have repeatedly thwarted doctors' efforts to learn more about marijuana's medicinal attributes with careful clinical trials. One San Francisco research team finally got permission last year from the Food and Drug Administration for a pilot experiment to test marijuana's safety. But the only legal source of pot in this country—the National Institute on Drug Abuse—refuses to provide it.

The truth is that—according to hundreds of victims of diseases including glaucoma, multiple sclerosis, depression, cancer, epilepsy, and AIDS—the efficacy of the plant is extraordinary. "The pain and suffering of the side effects [of cancer treatment] is often worse than the distress induced by the tumor itself," Stephen Jay Gould, the esteemed Harvard biologist who survived abdominal cancer, told Harvard Medical School's Lester Grinspoon and James Bakalar, the authors of *Marihuana: The Forbidden Medicine.* Gould was close to stopping treatment before someone told him that smoking pot would stop the debilitating nausea. "The rest of the story is short and sweet," he said. "Marijuana worked like a charm."

Since pot clearly works, and since it is safe—"one of the safest therapeutically active substances known to man," the DEA's administrative law judge, Francis Young, concluded in 1988—patients suffering from debilitating diseases are mystified that authorities refuse to let them use it as medicine.

"Anything that marijuana can do for medical purposes can be done now by synthetic drugs," claims Lee Brown, Clinton's director of drug control policy. But this simply isn't true. Like Bill Anderson, most patients who use marijuana have been prescribed every medicine under the sun. Naturally, they would prefer to avoid arrest and harassment—like that visited on Ken and Barbara Jenks, a couple with AIDS whose two marijuana plants were seized in a military-style raid of their motor home in 1990.

The irony is that marijuana is far safer than many painkillers which doctors can already prescribe legally. And, unlike marijuana, many prescription drugs carry ferocious side effects. Greg Paufler, for example, has been given steroids, diuretics, and Valium for the symptoms of multiple sclerosis. The steroids caused fluid retention, bloating, and a weight gain of 100 pounds. The sleeping pills made him semi-catatonic. And he became addicted to Valium. Yet none of these drugs do what marijuana does—alleviate his severe, painful spasms.

The government pushes Marinol, a synthetic pill that contains THC, one of the active ingredients in marijuana. But patients say that it is not as effective—and that the side effects can be severe. "It was terrible," says Barbara Douglass, who took Marinol for three months as treatment for multiple sclerosis.

The insistence on denying this plant to thousands of sick people—many of whom are terminal patients and merely want to ease their suffering while they're still alive—is a perfect parable of drug war idiocy. Until the spring of 1992, patients could apply for a compassionate exemption from the law. But when it was flooded with pleas from cancer and AIDS sufferers for permission to use marijuana, the Public Health Service canceled the program. Letting sick people smoke marijuana would send the message that "this stuff can't be so bad," said James O. Mason, then head of the service. "It gives a bad signal."

This logic fits neatly in a drug war that is more religious than rational. In addition to denying the harm of prohibition, officials are loathe to concede *any* benefit of a restricted substance. Let the sick and the suffering, they say, be damned. *–J.W.S.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What we have had a hard time learning is that there are a plethora of options between prohibition and laissez-faire. In 1933, after prohibition, the federal government withdrew entirely from regulating the market in spirits. No limits were placed on marketing or advertising, and the siege from Madison Avenue and Hollywood began immediately. For years, the government seemed unable to counter the excesses of legal drug pushers like Philip Morris and Seagrams. Ads for tobacco, beer and liquor dominated the worlds of art and entertainment.

The tide began to turn in 1964, when the Surgeon General issued the first of a series of reports on the dangers of smoking. In 1971 cigarette ads were banned from TV and radio. The media began to open its eyes as well. Meanwhile, there was an equally important change in attitudes. It was once respectable to drink two or three martinis at a business lunch. Today it is not. Nor do we wink at drunk driving or smoking by pregnant women. Cigarette use, in fact, has declined dramatically since the sixties.

President Clinton's policy on cigarettes points the way toward middle ground. Drugs should be legally available but tightly restricted, especially when it comes to ads and marketing.

But much has been left undone. The TV and radio ban, for example, left the bulk of cigarette marketing untouched. And ironically, tobacco companies didn't much mind the ban, because it also dealt a severe blow to a campaign of negative advertising. Under the "fairness doctrine," TV and radio stations in the late sixties gave free air time to anti-smoking spots, such as one that mocked the Marlboro man by showing him coughing and wheezing. These ads were extremely effective, more so, many believed, than the Surgeon General's warnings. Once the tobacco ads were banned, though, TV and radio stations were no longer required to run the negative spots.

It is high time to begin a massive campaign of negative advertising against both cigarettes and alcohol. And we can ban advertising for intoxicants entirely. President Clinton, who has moved to restrict advertising that encourages smoking *and* to require tobacco companies to pay for a campaign against smoking, has taken a step in the right direction. (As J.M. Balkin argues on page 24, Philip Morris and friends can't hide behind the First Amendment on this one.)

In a recent essay in *The New Republic*, Thomas Laqueur criticized Clinton's initiative on cigarette advertising as the product of "prohibitionist energies." But this is the simple-minded either/or attitude that got us into such a mess. Yes, cigarettes and alcohol ought to be legally available. But that doesn't mean we can't curb the pushers, educate people about the dangers, and generally try to reduce the harm.

The same approach should be employed with now-illegal drugs. An end to prohibition need not mean official endorsement of crack or heroin, but instead could be an opportunity to redouble efforts to limit their use. Drug use would rise after prohibition—but it wouldn't be the catastrophic explosion that drug warriors predict. They count on both distortions of history (claiming an explosion of alcohol use in 1933) and exaggerations of the dangers of cocaine, heroin, and speed—not to mention marijuana and hallucinogens. Though all intoxicants should be taken seriously, these drugs are neither as powerful, addictive, or attractive as many imagine. Among the population of non-users, 97 percent of Americans say they would be "not very likely" or "not at all likely" to try cocaine if it were legal. And even those who would try it in a legal regime would not find themselves immediately in the grip of an insatiable habit. As with alcohol, heavy dependence on cocaine and heroin is acquired over time.

It is a reasonable concern that the disadvantaged would be most vulnerable in a system where drugs are cheap and legally available. But the poor are also the ones paying the heaviest price for prohibition. Most drug users are not poor minorities, but these groups are most affected by the illegal drug trade. "Each of our inner cities has become a bloody Bosnia," writes David Morrison, the journalist and former addict. "But who with the power to make a difference really gives a damn? Having decamped for the suburbs, the middle classes don't have to see the dreadful damage done."

Of course, lifting prohibition would not be a panacea for our most troubled communities. But imagine the benefits of cutting out the black mar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ket. Profit would be eliminated from the drug trade, which means kids wouldn't be drawn to dealing, addicts wouldn't be pushed to thieving, and the sea of violence and crime would ebb. Innocent kids like Launice Smith wouldn't be caught in the crossfire. Students like Jovan Rogers, who survived the drug trade and returned to school, would be less likely to drop out in the first place. And the intense marketing efforts of drug dealers in schoolyards and hallways would stop. (As it stands, dealers encourage users however they can—the more addicts, the more profits for them.)

Meanwhile, police could focus on real crime—and they'd have the prison space to lock up violent or repeat offenders. Businesses, now scared off by inner-city crime, might be drawn back into these communities, and a cycle of recovery could begin. For drug addicts, the federal government could spend the billions now wasted on law enforcement and interdiction to provide effective treatment.

At the same time, the government could clamp down on the alcohol and cigarette corporate behemoths, and make sure that such they never get their hands on now-illegal drugs by controlling distribution through package stores—displaying warnings in the stores and on containers themselves. Advertising and marketing, clearly, would be prohibited and government would also have to fund an intensive campaign of public education to prevent misuse, abuse, and addiction.

Beyond government, we must recognize as a culture the damage done by drugs—even if we accept the rights of individuals to use them. The entertainment industry should take this responsibility very seriously. As it is, the scare tactics used by the government give even greater currency to Hollywood's images of the hip, outlaw drug user.

After so many years of prohibition—and a vociferous government effort to distort the truth—it's not hard to imagine why people would fear an epidemic of new drug addicts after prohibition. But such fears are exaggerated. The increase in use could be kept to a minimum by smart public policy. Meanwhile, we would be undoing the horror of present policy—which fractures communities, leaves kids scared to go to the playground, and pushes young men toward death or jail.

With reforms, we could stop this great damage. The good, almost certainly, would far overshadow the new problems created. Isn't it a moral imperative that we at least try? If legalization proves to be a failure—though the best evidence indicates it would not—we could return to present policy, or find a third way.

Many may be tempted to split the difference—maintain prohibition, but ease some of the penalties. Or legalize the mildest of the illegal drugs, such as marijuana. Or make drugs available to addicts by prescription. There's nothing to prevent experimenting with different strategies. But remember, the tighter the restrictions, the more fuel to the fire of the black market. Undermining the black market has to be the principle of any reform.

The other temptation is to justify the costs of prohibition in moral terms—"drugs are evil." But pining for a "drug-free America" doesn't change the reality that we'll never have one. Even Lee Brown concedes that the best he can do—with a budget approaching $15 billion dollars—is reduce drug use by 5 percent annually. Is dissuading a few hundred thousand marijuana users worth the terror of the black market?

Ultimately drug policy does come down to tradeoffs. The simple truth is that humans are tempted by intoxicants. And, in a free society like ours, the rights of life and liberty will always be accompanied by people pursuing stiff drinks, or lines of cocaine, or marijuana cigarettes. Inflating the price of drugs through prohibition and jailing sellers and users of drugs sprang from a noble sentiment—that we could eliminate the scourge of addiction, or limit it significantly. Now we know that the enormous efforts in law enforcement have yielded few benefits in curbing drug abuse—and are a paltry disincentive for many drug users and would-be users. The prohibition experiment has failed. The time has come to recognize the great harm it has done. The United States is now akin to a person with poison ivy, scratching furiously at the rashes, and holding fast in denial when they do not go away: Soon, the blood begins to flow. These wounds shows themselves every day, in brutal murders and bleak urban landscapes.

We will always have a "drug problem" of some sort. The question is: What *kind* of drug problem? Ultimately, choosing between regulation and prohibition turns on a simple question: Is it better to allow some individuals to make a bad choice, or to subject many, many innocent people to drive-by shootings, rampant crime, and dangerous schools? The moral policy is to protect the innocent—and then do our best to help the others as well. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Memo of the Month

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
with Primary Campuses at:
Chattanooga Martin
Knoxville Memphis

Office of the President
Knoxville 37996-0[illegible]
Telephone 615/974-[illegible]

MEMORANDUM

TO:

FROM: Lamar Alexander

DATE: September 6, 1989

SUBJECT: "UTK"

I would like for us to try to use "UTK" less. These initials sound as if we were trying to describe the corner of a card catalogue in some basement instead of a university trying to be among the best respected in America.

"The University of Tennessee, Knoxville" or "UT, Knoxville" is best. "Knoxville" will work sometimes. Just "UT" works many times. (The sports press--which accounts for 90 percent of the UT, Knoxville media coverage--will always use "UT.") I suppose that for some of our documents "UTK" is sometimes inescapable. I try to avoid using "UTK" and I find that I usually can without slighting other campuses.

This is more important than you might think because names are important. I don't think I've ever heard the University of California, Berkeley referred to as "UCB" or the University of Michigan as "UMAA."

As for our other campuses, both "UT Memphis" and "UT Martin" are comfortable with those names. Many people around UT, Chattanooga also use "UTC" which in this case is just fine, just as "UVA" and "UCLA" are fine in those circumstances. In general, people ought to use names they are comfortable with. No one I know is very comfortable using "UTK."

Could you discuss this with staffs and assistants, especially those who put out our numerous memos and publications? Thanks.

LA/jp

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Student Loans: The Wrong Cuts

With this vital program, Republicans appear to prefer a wasteful monopoly to effective competition

BY JONATHAN COHN

Young people in this country are feeling the squeeze. Even as it's getting harder to get a decent job without a college degree, college itself is becoming prohibitively expensive for more and more people. From 1984 to 1993, median family income increased by 3 percent, while the average cost of tuition and fees at private colleges went up 91 percent. In real terms, the median family income keeps going down while tuition—at public as well as private schools—keeps shooting up.

The story gets even worse. As tuition explodes, federal and state education money is drying up and students are bearing a larger and larger share of the tuition burden. Reflecting the need for more aid, the federal student loan guarantee program saw loans grow 57 percent between 1992 and 1994. And these loans leave students with huge debts. Paying back $50,000 at 8 percent over 10 years, for example, would mean a monthly payment of $644. This makes it impossible for many graduates to go into low-paying lines of work like teaching, and it also discourages many from seeking a college education in the first place.

Meanwhile, a host of financial institutions have been making a mint off struggling students. Until recently, the federal government did not actually loan money to students directly; rather, it guaranteed private loans. The system proved expensive and wasteful. Private lenders made huge sums of money while doing little work and taking no risk. And service to students was decidedly not a priority.

In 1993, President Clinton decided to do something about it. Under his plan, which passed in Congress that summer, the government went beyond merely guaranteeing bank loans. Students were given the option of borrowing money directly from the Treasury. "Direct lending," as this program is called, quickly became wildly popular among students and schools, in part because the government streamlined the process to reduce paperwork. It has also saved taxpayer dollars by cutting out the middlemen.

The crucial element of direct lending, though, is the option of what's called income-contingent loans, which lets students pay off their debt as a

Jonathan Cohn is managing editor of The American Prospect.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

percentage of their income, rather than set, monthly sums. Tying debt repayment to income was Clinton's original goal in reforming the student loan program: He wanted to encourage college graduates to take low-paying jobs in public service.

The benefits of direct lending, then, are connected both to government reform and to the broad social good. As a reform, it has injected competition into a student loan system once monopolized by lethargic private lenders. The social good is that by allowing flexibility for students repaying their debt—something that banks were unwilling to do—the government encourages post-graduate jobs in Teach for America and the Peace Corps, as opposed to just Wall Street and Madison Avenue. For these reasons, student loan reform is an all too rare success story in the federal government's recent history. "It's the best thing since microwaveable brownies," Colorado State University student Anthony Gallegos raved in *U.S. News & World Report.*

Sound like a good candidate for a round of bipartisan back-slapping? It would seem so, but despite direct lending's clear successes, Republicans in Congress are moving to limit sharply—or eliminate entirely—the program, which would also spell the end of pay-as-you-can loans. The financial institutions who were once making out like bandits have been lobbying hard to get back the business they've lost. And the GOP is inclined to give it to them, even though it's a bad deal for everyone else. Instead of doing more to fix the student loan program, Republicans seem intent on breaking it again.

Federal Loan Follies

Since 1966, the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) has helped more than 40 million Americans through college. But the program carrying out this admirable mission also developed a reputation as one of the federal government's most inefficient. The program cost billions to run—most of which went not to students but to quasi-governmental corporations that had learned to scam the system. For years, the loan program was denounced from both sides of the aisle as wasteful; it prompted a constant stream of investigations and warnings from the General Accounting Office. In 1991, for example, loans lost to default cost the federal government $3.6 billion.

The trouble was inherent in FFELP's basic design. Until Clinton's reforms, the government did not actually lend money to students, but rather coaxed banks to do so—by both guaranteeing loans and offering subsidies. Because the banks had very little incentive to get the money back once they'd loaned it—they'd get their money regardless, whether from the student or the government—"guaranty agencies" were created to police the banks. These guaranty agencies, state-chartered but privately owned, had three jobs. When a bank asked the government for reimbursement, claiming that a student had defaulted on the loan, the guaranty agency would: (1) find out if the bank had made a "good-faith" effort to collect; (2) if it had, pay the bank with money it was holding on behalf of the federal treasury; and (3) finally, pursue the loan itself, in a last ditch effort to save the federal government from swallowing the cost of the loan.

But there were serious problems with this plan. For one, guaranty agencies were literally guaranteed the contract by law, so they never had to bid for the work or worry that they'd get axed for poor performance. Worse still, the guaranty agencies actually had an incentive to do their job *poorly*. If they reported a lazy bank for failing to try to collect a loan, they got no reward. But if they ignored the banks, and went after all the loans themselves, they got to keep 27 percent of the money they recovered.

Not all guaranty agencies were corrupt; many did their jobs honestly and well. But there were enough bad apples—and enough other loopholes that allowed private companies to make a killing off the student loan program—that the federal government found itself wasting taxpayer dollars that were supposed to be helping young people go to college.

When he assumed office, Clinton pushed to reform this system, both to improve the pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gram's efficiency and to give students the option of paying their loans back as a percentage of their income. Since the government was assuming the risk anyway—and since the maze of banks and guaranty agencies had proven to be a nightmare of waste and abuse—why not lend money directly from the federal Treasury? This would require the government to come up with the cash for loans. But there was potential for long-term savings, since taxpayers wouldn't have to pay interest subsidies to the banks or fork over a 27 percent cut to guaranty agencies. Clinton's idea was to have the IRS—which would have the necessary data on income—handle loan collections.

In a compromise with Congress, the bill the President signed implemented direct lending only partially. The Department of Education would have to compete with the private loan providers—banks and government-chartered groups like the Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae)—for much of the business. Direct lending would be capped at 5 percent of the total loans in the first year, but eventually anyone who wanted to could participate.

Blinded by the Right

Actually, the final bill was in many ways an improvement over what Clinton originally wanted. Setting up dual programs—both the Education Department (through direct lending) and private lenders (through the old system) would make loans to students—is a tried and true method of maintaining efficiency. Sure enough, when the government implemented a simplified application process and a speedier transfer of funds, private lenders followed suit. Forced to compete with direct lenders, Sallie Mae, which holds more student loans than any other lending agency, now offers all kinds of new repayment options for students. The same benefit was evident in the early years of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which acted as a yardstick to keep private utilities from gouging their customers.

The great disappointment of the battle over student loan reform was the loss of the IRS collection plan. As Steven Waldman recounts in *The Bill*, this idea died not due to corporate lobbying—which was fierce—but because of congressional turf battles. In the current political climate, there's little chance of reviving this idea. But it is a reform to keep pushing, since it would vastly simplify the process of tying loan payments to income.

So if these reforms were so smart, why do Republicans insist on rolling them back? Is it that they can't stand the idea of President Clinton—or activist government—doing something right? Or are they caving to private lenders, who prefer the old system of inefficient monopolies because they made more money that way?

The answer is "both." "It's pretty ridiculous to turn the Department of Education into some big lending institution, and the government has not exactly proved itself adept at this," says an aide to House Education and Opportunities Committee Chair William Goodling, clearly playing the anti-government card. "This is not something most Americans are comfortable with."

To make their point, Republicans cite figures that depict direct lending as vastly more expensive than the old system of banks and guaranty agencies. But their calculations are screwy. The Republicans changed the scoring rules for student loans, instructing the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to count the administrative costs of the direct lending program—but not the guaranteed loan program. In other words, the CBO had to take into account all the costs associated with overseeing direct lending, while excluding, for example, $160 million in annual subsidies to guaranty agencies that existed in the old program.

The Republicans' new accounting method by itself wouldn't be objectionable if the CBO applied it equally to both programs. But this way, the direct lending program is portrayed as much more expensive than the old guaranteed loan program. In fact, the original CBO estimate showed direct lending could save $12 billion over five years. That estimate may have been inflated because CBO didn't account for administrative costs (the Republicans did have a point on that), but the existence of at least some savings is undeniable. Since direct lending eliminates all the subsidies to banks, guaranty agencies, and other intermediaries, it is bound to bring significant savings. "As long as it is necessary to provide a profit to induce lenders to guarantee student loans," Federal Reserve Board member Lawrence Lindsey wrote recently in a letter to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GOP Senator Spencer Abraham, "direct lending will be cheaper."

The best system would have direct lending and private banks compete, so that each could keep the other in line. The Republican solution, on the other hand, is to give the private-lending industry back its monopoly and then make it very difficult for the government to prevent abuse. Goodling's proposal would cut administrative funding for loan programs by two-thirds. Some of these cuts account for staff reduction in the direct lending program. But they would also force scalebacks in the Administration's ability to oversee the banks and guaranty agencies. Over seven years, those cuts could precipitate anywhere from $1.5 billion to $4 billion in new waste and fraud, according to reports by the GAO and the Education Department.

The best system would have direct lending and private banks compete, so that each could keep the other in line. The GOP prefers a monopoly.

The conspicuous beneficiaries of these changes would be the guaranty agencies and banks, both of which showed their strength in the 1993 student loan debate and came back with a vengeance this year. Republican proposals explicitly forbid the Education Department from cutting subsidies to the guaranty agencies. Republicans have also thwarted the Administration's effort to take back a $1.8 billion fund that the guaranty agencies are sitting on—taxpayer money originally designated to repay banks for student loan defaults that the agencies now use to invest and make profit.

Less Competition, More Waste

Republicans claim to be seeking free market efficiency. But with student loans, they are moving toward a system with less competition and more waste. A provision in Goodling's bill would forbid the Education Department from advertising to students the option to transfer a private loan to the government, and thus get the benefits of paying back as a percentage of income. Lenders had complained they were losing business—25,000 loans have been switched over since 1993. But they were only losing business because students saw a better deal elsewhere.

If Gooding's bill passes, who will pay for these anti-reforms? Students, most likely. Although the government requires income-contingent payback options for all student loans, private lenders have shown great resistance in the absence of government competition, and enforcing the rule is difficult. The bottom line is that pay-as-you-can loans simply aren't feasible without direct lending. Private lenders don't want to do anything that might lose them money, and with the government removed as a competitor, they'll have no incentive to offer complicated payback plans. That means fewer graduates doing noble or necessary—but low-paying—work.

The other potential loss for college students is the cutbacks in subsidies that they now receive to ease the loan burden. Republicans have put the in-school interest subsidy—which pays interest on loans while students are in school, so they can complete their studies before having to worry about loans—on the blocks. Under Republican plans, the average student debt under the Stafford Loan program could increase by more than $1,400 for a four-year undergraduate, and more than $10,000 for a four-year graduate student, according to the Education Department. Again, it's not just that students will be left with big bills. Many will be scared off from college in the first place.

The Republican proposals on student loans are indicative of their ideological world view and the true nature of their political loyalties. GOP fondness for the "private sector" is defended on the grounds of efficiency and fairness: Citizens should receive the best services possible and bloated government bureaucracies often can't deliver. But, in this case, reducing government presence means worse service, and a worse deal for taxpayers as well.

With the student loan program, Republicans have an opportunity to prove that they are truly interested in fighting government waste and protecting the working class—just as they have always claimed. Instead, they are choosing to act as patrons for rich financiers, assuming no one will call them on it.

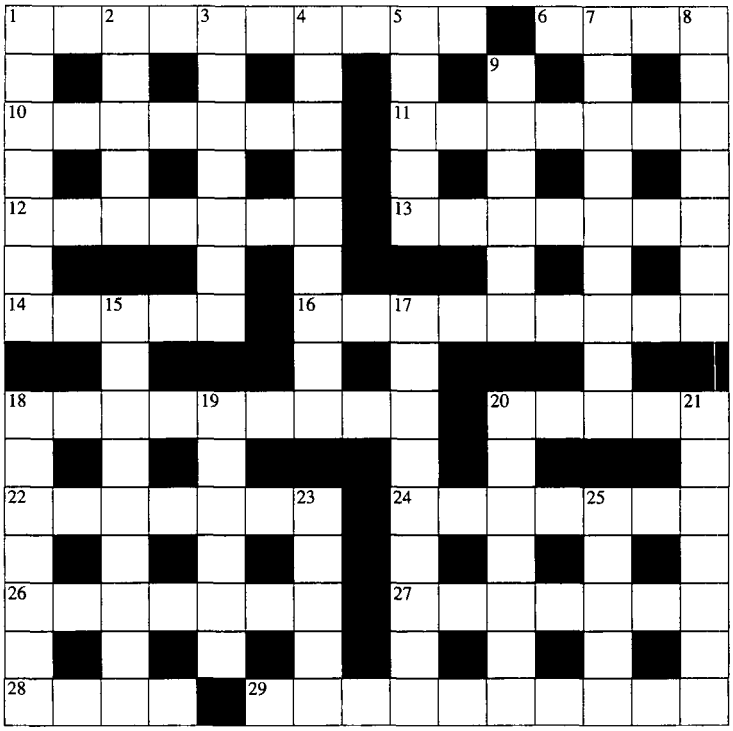
It's not too late to prove them wrong. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political Puzzle

BY JOHN BARCLAY

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words—thus (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, such as USA, are treated as one word.



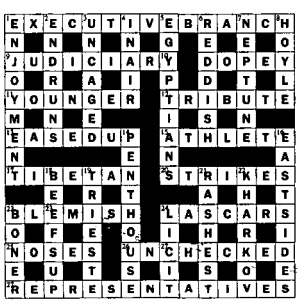
ACROSS

1. Leaders' priest ends plot. (10)
6. Tony part of windy city. (4)
10. Relaxes and uses pea soup. (5,2)
11. Stirred spoon with short Tennessee flight. (7)
12. Resident turns lewder around 50. (7)
13. Spell ruin to a break in schedule. (7)
14. Cowboy election consultant? (5)
16. Bad result making NFL stay around backing Los Angeles. (5,4)
18. Upset news for this department? (9)
20. Native relating my travels backwards. (5)
22. Exaggerated base letter in oil company. (5,2)
24. Minister in merchandising cuts of meat. (7)
26. Blocks agents' grouping around European leader. (7)
27. Establish short short-time total. (7)
28. Orally even course. (4)
29. Town gin has befuddled Irving. (10)

DOWN

1. Phosphorous fishing line for advocate. (7)
2. Follow directions around the country coming back. (5)
3. Constructed sun rail for narrow-minded. (7)
4. Open rates transformed international communications mode. (9)
5. Perfect alternative course. (5)
7. Tough issue rattles a top tooth. (3,6)
8. Tip coal around the hill. (7)
9. Opposition changed New York time. (6)
15. Extended athlete itched. (9)
17. Supports but strangely edits wish. (5,4)
18. Key Washington group in employing scab in Ethiopia. (7)
19. Key Washington group in a tense situation. (6)
20. No maids planned for state capitol. (7)
21. Luis moved into hotel for important treatment. (7)
23. Popular food not at top of the list? (5)
25. A little bit rented, we hear. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:

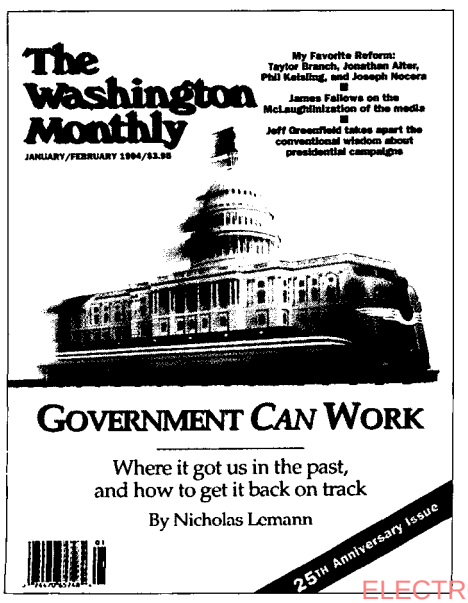


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This Holiday Season, Give Them Frankness, Sense, and Mirth . . .

The Washington Monthly

Give everyone on your gift list something they can really use: **The Washington Monthly.** Now you can share us with your friends with our best offer! You get the first subscription for $26, then every subscription after that is only $18, over half off the cover price!



Holiday Gift Order Form

Please enter a one year gift subscription for: (The gift can be for yourself if you are a new subscriber.)

1 Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
$26 Gift card message _____

2 Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
$18 Gift card message _____

3 Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
$18 Gift card message _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Charge my: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
Account Number _____ Expiration Date _____
Signature _____
☐ $ _____ enclosed. ☐ Bill me later. A5A01

Send to **The Washington Monthly** Box 587 Mount Morris IL 61054

Foreign subscriptions: please add $5 for surface delivery or $52 for air-mail delivery for each subscription.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Democratic Father of Modern Republicanism

George Wallace: Racism, repentance, and the roots of scapegoating "big government"

BY TAYLOR BRANCH

The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics
Dan T. Carter, *Simon and Schuster, $30*

George Wallace is the most prophetic embarrassment in American political history. He is detective Mark Fuhrman raised to colossal stature. Suppose, if you can, that the snarling tribal enforcer from the O.J. Simpson trial were to capitalize miraculously on the crudest self-indictments of his own mouth, somehow recovering enough of his blow-dried professionalism to get elected governor of Idaho four or five times. Suppose further that Governor Fuhrman quickly eclipsed Ross Perot, Jesse Jackson, and Colin Powell to become the nation's leading maverick force and along the way tore up partisan alignments that had stabilized American politics for more than a century. Then, Fuhrman would become a blinding legend, up there in Wallace country.

In 1963, the year of his debut as the new governor of Alabama, George Wallace appeared to guarantee himself a contemptible obscurity with three decisive acts. By his "Segregation forever!" inaugural address in January, he proved himself flat wrong on the seminal question of his time. In June, by "standing in the schoolhouse door" to block the enrollment of the first two black students at the last legally segregated state university, Wallace got himself shoved aside as a loser by federalized units of his own National Guard. In September, by excusing and belittling a crime of terror so pure that it galvanized a shocked nation—the bombing death during church hours of four black girls dressed in Sunday-school white—Wallace stamped himself as the Klanish symbol of unspeakable hate.

Thus spectacularly revealed as backward, ineffectual, and genocidally cruel—some of his later supporters actually wore "I Like Eich" buttons in tribute to executed Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann—Wallace promptly ran for president in 1964. Northern voters flocked to his shoestring campaign in numbers that amazed Wallace himself. In many respects, Wallace dominated the politics of the next two national elections, but respectable observers ever since have turned away from him as a haunting unmentionable. Brushing by what he called "a Southern populist of the meanest streak," Theodore White all but excluded Wallace from his book of reflections on postwar electoral politics.

Last year, in the first comprehensive biography, *George Wallace: American Populist*, former *Newsweek* correspondent Stephen Lesher interpreted Wallace as the harbinger of today's not-always-pretty national populist sentiments. Now comes Emory University historian Dan T. Carter with a second biography. A pleasure to read and an excellent, sweeping piece of work, *The Politics of Rage* is less forgiving of Wallace but no less cer-

Taylor Branch is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly *and author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning* Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tain that there is a profound lesson hidden in his career. Meanwhile, the old governor himself hangs on to life in retirement—crippled, incoherent, and repentant, apologizing tearfully to anyone ever damaged by his cries of "nigger." He is abandoned in the flesh even as writers ponder at last what it means that the zeitgeist is crawling to his door.

George Wallace was colorful on all sides, whether nasty, picaresque, evil, or downright funny, and his life brims with good stories for anyone who gets past the initial discomfort of race. From Carter's account we learn that in 1963, Wallace brought to his first appearance at Harvard a strangely bifocal speech, half a thoughtful treatise on *The Federalist Papers* and half a diatribe written by a Klan leader named Ace, author of the "Segregation forever!" address. Having introduced Ace by the exploits of his Klavern, which included one infamous ritual castration of a black man plucked randomly off the street, Carter lets readers grow accustomed to Ace's dual role over the years as Wallace's chief speechwriter. In public, Wallace used Ace's words to charm many of the Harvard students with his sporting treatment of hecklers. In private, Ace planned Wallace's 1968 presidential campaign at a country club convention in Alabama, together with an assortment of tycoons, Holocaust-deniers, super-patriots, and the ideological ancestors of today's religious right from across the nation.

Carter has a fine eye for archival detail, and he does not overlook salient issues from the complexities of state government. In one of my favorite nuggets, he explains in passing how Wallace used Alabama's self-insurance system. For decades, the state had found it cheaper to self-insure than to buy commercial insurance against fires and other hazards to public buildings, especially rural schools. However, to quiet accusations of socialistic risk management, Alabama agreed to forfeit most of these market savings by making estimated payments to insurance companies in lieu of "lost" premiums. Wallace shrewdly turned this corporate kitty into a political one by selectively channeling payments to friendly companies, which often turned out to be the ones that shared retainers with politicians Wallace wanted to control. Rounded out and polished, this practice amounted to legal payola from the state treasury.

This story is one of countless tangents from the career of another obsessive politician who was lit up on stage but hollow everywhere else, using up three wives. The life of Wallace is absorbing because both Lesher and Carter claim for him an overarching legacy that applies outside Alabama and down through our time. This is the central question: how to define his influence. "If he did not create the conservative groundswell that transformed American politics in the eighties," writes Carter, "he anticipated many of its themes." As indicated by his pastiche of subtitles, Carter approximates a thesis from several different angles but does not state one baldly. He associates Wallace with a "new" conservatism that is reckless by temperament and hostile to authority. Wallace's "attacks on the federal government have become the gospel of modern conservatism," Carter incisively declares, but he does not spell out whether racial hatred has transformed a general theory of government, or vice versa.

On race, both Lesher and Carter gravitate to the dilemma of how much to forgive Wallace in his old age. Has he truly changed? Did he really mean all those horrible segregationist deeds, or was hatred merely the edge of an ambition that is being validated now by history? In politics, Carter senses the powerful, paradoxical effects of Wallace the diehard Democrat on Republican analysts such as Kevin Phillips. "In a recommendation of breathtaking cynicism," writes Carter, "Phillips urged his party [in 1969] to work vigorously to maintain and expand black voting rights in the South, not as a moral issue, but because it would hasten the transfer of whites—North *and* South—to the Republican Party."

In my own research, which has brushed over Wallace in his early years as governor, I have come across one strikingly succinct formulation of his original secret, written in 1964 by an awestruck Alabama reporter struggling to explain the success of Wallace's first speeches outside the South: "He gave every hearer a chance to transmute a latent hostility toward the Negro into a hostility toward big government. The technique was effective." All these phrases carried understated meaning—"every hearer," "latent hostility," "big government," "technique." The reporter recognized that Wallace's power began in rhetorical innovation. Without harping on racial epithets, as everyone expected him to do, Wallace talked all around race by touching on the related fears of domination, coining new expressions such as "forced busing" and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"big government," which were anything but common clichés 30 years ago.

Writing about those early speeches, Lesher picks out many creations that have gained resonance, including Wallace's scornful references to "tax, tax, spend, spend" politicians, the "ultra-liberal controlled media," and of course, the "pointy-headed bureaucrats" from "central government" in Washington, who "can't even park their bicycles straight." Carter, for his part, opens a chapter with a quotation from Martin Luther King, Jr. that (I am sorry to say) had escaped me entirely. In 1963, across huge gaps of philosophy and pain, King appraised his nemesis as an "artful" fellow orator of fearful potential. "He just has four speeches," said King "but he works on them and hones them, so that they are little, minor classics."

Two main obstacles block the understanding of Wallace as a new moon above the national tides, pioneering a kind of velvet racialism in political rhetoric. First is the lingering image of his inflammatory lynch talk. Subtlety of words is not the first characteristic that jumps to mind for a governor who once vowed not to be "out-niggered" on the campaign stump. For a historian of Carter's depth, moreover, there is an abiding awareness that Wallace performed treacherous cosmetic surgery just above exposed nerves and arteries of racial politics.

A reminder of bloodcurdling reality ruined the second Wallace campaign for president in 1968. When he tried to choose a moderate for his running mate as a third-party candidate, supporters revolted against ex-governor of Kentucky "Happy" Chandler, branding him an "out-and-out integrationist," who, as baseball commissioner, had permitted Jackie Robinson to enter the major leagues. Shaken, Wallace substituted General Curtis LeMay at the last minute, but no amount of backroom coaching could keep the champion of strategic air power from waxing fond over nuclear weapons. "For once in his life, George Wallace was speechless," writes Carter in an entertaining account of the ruinous press conference at which LeMay volunteered that "the land crabs are a little bit hot" 10 years after bomb tests on Bikini Atoll.

The cleansing elevation above racial politics did not always go smoothly for Wallace, who lapsed again after being humiliated back home in a 1970 primary. His brother Gerald prescribed a fallback strategy for the runoff campaign against the incumbent governor—"We'll just throw the niggers around his neck"—and Wallace himself denounced Governor Albert Brewer as a "tool of black militants," in "spotted alliance" with do-gooders and liberal reporters. Wallace doctored photographs to show Brewer's daughters with black boyfriends, and hit the airwaves with the following announcement: "Suppose your wife is driving home at 11 o'clock at night. She is stopped by a highway patrolman. He turns out to be black. Think about it.... Elect George C. Wallace." He squeezed out an ugly victory at some cost to his national dignity.

A second factor obscures the trajectory of Wallace's influence: He was the father of a new, white man's anti-government, anti-Washington Republican Party even though he still hated Republicans. From redneck to Republican and from raw to Reagan, he was a transitional figure for the partisan structure as well as the texture of American politics. To appreciate these sweeping changes, we must remember that when Wallace first ran for president in 1964, there were no Southern Republicans in the House of Representatives. Not one. Of 172 Republicans in the House, 138 supported the landmark civil rights bill that outlawed segregation that year. The GOP was still the Party of

Wallace Redux

George Wallace deeply regretted his failure to enter the California primary in 1964. Had he anticipated the thunderous reception for him there, he might have followed Strom Thurmond into the Republican Party during the sixties, as Richard Nixon had feared.

"California will not submit its destiny to faceless federal bureaucrats or even congressional barons!" the governor roared. "We declare to Washington that California is a proud and sovereign state, not a colony of the federal government."

Surprise. Although, this language is vintage George Wallace from 1964 these are actually the biggest applause lines from Governor Pete Wilson's inaugural address early this year. Wilson has since entered GOP presidential primaries on a platform aimed against the most powerless elements of society—immigrants and minority applicants for affirmative action. *-T.B.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lincoln, but the first seven Southern Republicans were elected to the House that year, five of them Wallace supporters from Alabama. Now, 30 years later, white Southern candidates are completing their evacuation of the Democratic Party. The congressional delegation from Georgia consists of eight white Republicans and three black Democrats—a lineup scarcely imaginable in the sixties.

George Wallace laid the groundwork for the partisan revolution by campaigning against *both* national parties as agents of federal tyranny. Republicans and Democrats were identical partners—"Tweedledum and Tweedledee," he called them—"seizing control" of local schools, businesses, and courts to carry out the integrationist agenda. Oddly enough, Wallace's scathing attacks mirrored the rhetoric of Malcolm X, who saw integration as a sham and not a "dime's worth" of difference between Democrats and Republicans. Wallace and Malcolm X ridiculed white liberals in almost identical language, gleefully describing the bulging private schools and panic bridges thrown up to new suburbs. By skewering the stiff compromise between the two parties, Wallace helped make the word "liberal" a general epithet.

Carter is at his best in describing the contest between Wallace and Richard Nixon. After winning the White House in 1968, Nixon was consumed by political threats to his reelection. But not from Democrats. "My concern was about Wallace," he wrote privately. Unlike the rest of the world, which tried to dismiss Wallace after his second national failure, Nixon focused on the growing menace of a third-party candidate who, in spite of the LeMay fiasco, had won 58 electoral votes and carried only one less state than GOP nominee Barry Goldwater in 1964. The slightest improvement in the Wallace vote in 1968 would have elected Hubert Humphrey.

Therefore, Nixon set out to destroy or seduce Wallace before 1972. Carter's account of the skullduggery is captivating and newsworthy; it reads like a real-life preview of Watergate—which it was. Nixon sent a clandestine $400,000 to finance Albert Brewer, Wallace's opponent in 1970. When Wallace won anyway, Nixon wrote "Need to Handle Wallace" at the top of his strategy pad for 1972. His minions spent all of 1971 trying to indict Wallace for something. In a transparent settlement, the Justice Department publicly dropped its corruption investigation of brother Gerald Wallace one day before Governor Wallace announced that he would run for president as a Democrat this time, not as an independent. Much to Nixon's relief, Wallace carved up Democrats instead of him. His "non-racial" attacks on school busing paralyzed presidential rivals "like so many deer frozen by the bright lights of an oncoming car," says Carter. In the early Florida primary, Wallace placed far ahead of Humphrey, McGovern, Muskie, and eight other Democrats. He rolled up victories until May, winning Michigan and Maryland in the same week that Wallace himself was paralyzed by the bullets of a would-be assassin.

Nixon remained terrified of Wallace even as a paraplegic. His "greatest nightmare," writes Carter, was that Wallace would miss the Democratic primaries but recover enough to run as an independent again in the general election. Accordingly, the White House provided Wallace with comfort money in the hospital, and Nixon sent both Billy Graham and John Connolly to beg Wallace to stay out of the race. They succeeded. Two years later, on his own political deathbed, Nixon himself begged Wallace to speak up against impeachment. "Well, Al, there goes the presidency," he sighed to Al Haig when Wallace refused.

Nixon knew that Wallace voters were becoming natural Republicans. With revenue sharing—his version of today's block grants—Nixon moved from Lincoln Republicanism toward a posture compatible with Wallace's version of states' rights. From his sickbed, Wallace watched the white South follow the path he had marked toward an anti-government ideology that the Republican party adopted. For more than a century, his Democrats had straddled a core identity that upheld both the common people and the segregated South. Now segregation was being lost, formally, and at the same time Wallace's racial alchemy was eating away at the party's distinctive bond with ordinary citizens. Today Wallace's legacy is clear. He enticed the children of FDR Democrats to think of government not as savior, refuge, compact of fellow citizens—or even as their problem—but as the enemy. As an old populist Democrat who still loves to disdain bigshots for "sipping their martinis with their little fingers up in the air," Wallace nurses some misgivings. Carter quotes his brooding farewell from office: "I hope the rich and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Irving Kristol's Life—and Mine

Beyond a dislike for mushy liberalism, our experiences have taken us in different directions

BY CHARLES PETERS

Neoconservatism: The Autobiography of An Idea
Irving Kristol, *The Free Press*, $25

Although this is mostly a collection of previously published essays, it is notable because of the new "autobiographical memoir" that begins the book. I was especially interested in the memoir because Kristol is trying to use a life story to explain how ideas grow out of experience. I had made a similar attempt in my autobiography, *Tilting at Windmills*. Kristol and I have much else in common. We have both been accused of being "godfathers" of related movements: neoconservatism in his case, neoliberalism in mine. We have both founded publications that have as one of their purposes exposing the mushiness in liberal thought—his, *The Public Interest*, did it with essays and social science research; mine, *The Washington Monthly*, with journalism. Both of us have been called to this mission in considerable part by the influence of my teacher and his friend, Lionel Trilling. Both of us had contempt for the kind of liberal who thought it McCarthyite to suggest that Stalinism was evil or even to call a communist a communist. (That in expressing this contempt Kristol sometimes betrayed too little respect for the First Amendment was pointed out in cogent letters to *Commentary* from Alan Westin and Joseph Rauh in response to Kristol's famous—or infamous to many on the left—"Civil Liberties 1952—A Study in Confusion.")

We each had childhood experiences with religion that, in Kristol's words, which are equally applicable to me, "made it impossible for me to become anti-religious even though my subsequent intellectual commitment kept trying to steer me in that direction." Like so many other young people in the thirties and forties, we had adolescent flirtations with socialism. We also went through a period of intellectual snobbery that was characterized in both our cases by an avoidance of any movie that wasn't foreign. In fact, we almost certainly went to the same movie theater, the Thalia off Broadway on 95th Street. In the late forties, Kristol lived in an apartment above the 96th and Broadway Bickford's where I often had coffee because I lived a block or two away and they kept the price at a nickel long after most other restaurants had raised it.

But there our similarities end and the differences begin. Irving Kristol has come to stand for many things I think are wrong in today's politics. The contrast in our life experiences—and in the way we remember and think about those experiences—helps explain the way our ideas differ today. "Bohemia," Kristol writes of himself and his young wife, Bea, "had no attractions for us." It had immense allure for me. I devoted much of my energy to the pursuit of young women, and spent a lot of evenings in the jazz clubs of 52nd Street and in the neighborhood bars around Broadway and 96th—my devotion to these establishments is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suggested by the fact that I can still remember their names: the Riverside, Neary's, and Quinn and Kling's—and had a number of friends like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac who were considered by others to be somewhere between exotic and disreputable.

Although my views on values are now much more similar to the Kristols', I suspect that my experience during the forties has made me more tolerant of those who are different. Even our childhood experiences with religion can be distinguished in this regard. He says he, a Jew, was taught "to hate the goyim and to spit whenever we passed their churches." I, as a young Christian, was not taught to hate the Jews. My parents subscribed to the kind of moderate, if still far from admirable, antisemitism that kept Jews out of country clubs but treated them as equals in business and law and involved no hatred. In fact, by the time I was 12, in 1938, I was arguing in Sunday School that Hitler's treatment of the Jews was horribly un-Christian.

The most dramatic difference between us was in our reaction to fellow enlisted men in the U.S. Army during World War II. He saw them as "too easily inclined to loot, to rape, and to shoot prisoners of war." He believed the authority of the army hierarchy was the only force that could curb the evil he saw in the souls of these young men. "Again and again," Kristol writes, "I found reason to think better of the army and less well of my fellow enlisted men."

I liked most of my fellow enlisted men. In fact, to the extent that I had problems in the service, they tended to be with authority in the form of a series of first sergeants who suspected me of having an irreverent attitude.

A carryover of Kristol's disdain for enlisted men may have had something to do with the only time we ever tangled. The scene was a conference on neoconservatism that was held in Berlin a dozen or so years ago. Kristol suggested that what America needed was a nice little war that could be won with ease and would make the country feel good about itself. I argued that feeling good could not justify the loss of life, both in the population we attacked and among our own soldiers and sailors. Kristol was unpersuaded.

But then again, even though I had spoken with some heat, he didn't become angry. He is both highly rational and genial, a description that also applies to his wife, Bea, the eminent social historian who writes as Gertrude Himmelfarb. So it's impossible for me to think of him as a bad or evil man.

To some extent, I think our differences come simply from the fact that his base of experience is narrower than my own. For example, in the army, his regiment, he says, "was heavily populated by thugs or near thugs from Cicero, Illinois (Al Capone's old home)." My army experience involved me with four different groups for several months each. There were a few really bad guys in one of the groups. But for the most part, the men were decent and sensible, the kind of people who made me believe in democracy. Kristol, however, generalized his narrow experience and decided that looking at the common man as he "actually existed—as distinct from his idealized version" meant that "the prospects for democratic socialism were nil."

I share Kristol's scorn for the fantasy version of the common man that existed in the minds of many liberal intellectuals of the thirties and forties. The common man was not always as pure as they wanted him to be. But he wasn't as bad as Kristol came to think. The truth, it seems to me, lies somewhere between Rousseau and Hobbes. There are saints and sinners, geniuses and fools, throughout all levels of society, with enough rough-but-essentially-good characters like Huckleberry Finn and Jim to make the average quite acceptable.

Ten percent of Kristol's book is devoted to his life story, the rest to his ideas. In my book, the proportion was about three-quarters life, one-quarter ideas. This, alas, could simply reflect an excess of vanity or a poverty of intellect on my part. But it may also mean that I had a more varied life experience to tell about. I had worked in several summer theaters, a major advertising agency, a state legislature, a federal bureaucracy, and was a lawyer in the judicial system. I had run for office myself and had been active in the campaigns of others. And I had lived for more than 20 years in the kind of American town—definitely not a big city, and strongly influenced by both southern and midwestern culture—that Kristol has missed, living as he has in Washington, Chicago and, for most of his life, New York.

This does not necessarily make me wiser. But it does mean that I have a greater variety of expe-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rience to draw on. So does my career as a journalist compared to Kristol's as an essayist. The essay is written and researched in the library or the writer's apartment. A journalist must go out and interview and observe other people. I first became involved in this process 34 years ago when I began traveling to Peace Corps programs around the world to try to discover what we were doing right and wrong by observing the volunteers in action and talking to them and the people they were working with. Such human interaction means that the journalist's views are more likely to be tempered by what he has seen and heard in the course of reporting rather than determined almost entirely by the reading, arguing, and thinking that are the main sources for the intellectual essayist.

Another source the essayist relies on is memory. If he's very smart, he can usually get away with it. But occasionally the game is given away. Thus, I noticed that Kristol's galleys said that, "in 1968, only a few neoconservatives supported Barry Goldwater." Goldwater, of course, ran in 1964. When I checked the final bound book to see if the error had been corrected, Kristol's memory had caught it but failed him again in the words that followed, "while the rest of us went along with Hubert Humphrey." Humphrey ran in '68 against Nixon, not in '64 against Goldwater.

This kind of memory problem is not crucial. But the kind that is crucial is when the memory is based on experience that is too narrow. Remember how Kristol generalized from his unhappy army experience. How many World War II veterans have you heard describe their comrades as thugs? Kristol's kind of reasoning from thin experience is the classic conservative problem. They know the fellows at the country club or in the executive suite, or like Kristol, at think tanks like the American Enterprise Institute, where any disagreement is likely to be confined to the various shadings of right-wing ideology. Perhaps what's most maddening of all about these people is their smug sense that the experiences they haven't had aren't worth having.

Although there is still some life left in neoconservatism in its critique of liberal affirmative action programs and of liberal indifference to teaching values, the truth is that the "neo" is almost gone from Kristol's conservatism. He is just like the other conservatives: indifferent or hostile to protecting health, safety, and the environment, or to raising the income of those down below or reducing the obscene share of those at the top.

Perhaps the greatest irony lies in what Kristol's son, Bill, did to the Clinton health proposal. He told the Republicans not to try to reach a compromise on a good program, that Clinton had to lose in order for them to win. This is essentially the advice that Lenin gave to his followers about Kerensky's program: make it fail so that we can win.

Irving Kristol devoted much of his life to exposing just this kind of tactic and nothing is more revealing of his loss of faith in democratic government and the sensible compromises that make it work than his failure to repudiate the advice his son gave. It is clear from this book that Kristol and his son are ideological allies. Indeed, they are very much alike—brilliant, pretty nice guys who are terribly wrong about most of the main issues at this moment in history. □

The Making of a
CONSERVATIVE ENVIRONMENTALIST

Gordon K. Durnil

A prominent conservative Republican explains how and why he became an environmental activist and issues a plan for serious action.

"An engaging and thought-provoking memoir from a political conservative . . . Uncommonly sensible and heartfelt perspectives on being green . . ." **—Kirkus Reviews**

"My old friend Gordon Durnil has a message that deserves to be heard, and will be well received." **—Dan Quayle**

"A thoughtful, readable mandate." **—Ken Bode**

"Gordon Durnil's book proposes . . . a no-nonsense, workable alternative. . . . Few leaders of either political party can match his courage and insight." **—Jack Weinberg,** Greenpeace

"I highly recommend this well thought-out and provocative tome to the many who have yearned to know the truth about our God-given environment." **—Mary Matalin**

"His story makes clear that the cause of conservation can be a unifying cause and that a conservative ideology can embrace a conservationists's deep commitment." **—William K. Reilly**

216 pages, cloth $19.95

At bookstores or from
INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
Orders: 1-800-842-6796
http://www.indiana.edu/~iupress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Master of the Game

$10.7 billion and counting: The life and times of the greatest investor in history

BY JOSEPH NOCERA

Buffett: The Making of An American Capitalist
Roger Lowenstein, *Random House, $25*

It's hard not to like Warren Buffett, the so-called Sage of Omaha. With his aw-shucks manner, his homespun sayings, his unquestioned honesty—not to mention his preference for Cherry Coke over Bordeaux, hamburgers over filet mignon, and Omaha over New York—he presents a most appealing persona. Yes, it's true, he travels in a private jet, but he had the wit to name it "Indefensible." And yes, he now hobnobs with the likes of President Clinton, but no one can ever accuse him of disloyalty to his Nebraskan friends.

And it's hard not to admire the way Buffett made his fortune. From a standing start—his father was a small businessman and three-term congressman but left no great wealth behind—Buffett has become the second richest man in America, worth $10.7 billion. This entire fortune comes not from creating new companies (à la Bill Gates, the only man in America richer than Buffett), but rather by investing in them. This is astounding. For most of us, investing is the diciest of enterprises. Yet for over 30 years, the great bulk of Buffett's investments have gone in only one direction: up. And in an age when money managers often turn over their portfolios every six months, Buffett stays steady: He holds many of the same stocks today that he did 10 and even 20 years ago. His favorite time horizon, he likes to say, is "forever."

With Wall Street as full of scoundrels as ever—brokers who "churn" accounts to reap commissions; portfolio managers who leak their "favorite" stocks to the press, only to sell when the unwashed start buying—Buffett's probity stands in stark relief. He explains in simple English what he does and why to the shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway, his holding company and chief investment vehicle. Through it all, Buffett has gotten rich by staying true to himself—to his sense of the "right" way to invest and to live as well.

Thus has Buffett come to stand as a kind of living rebuke of this cynical time. He would seem to be proof—maybe the only proof left—that virtue can still be its own reward. That is why he has become an American icon. As Roger Lowenstein elegantly puts it towards the end of this sweet biography:

> We see him in his inner sanctum, without advisor or lackeys, opposite the framed and fading newspapers and the looming picture of his father.... Hours pass without interruption; the telephone scarcely rings. He pursues his craft, looking not for patterns on a screen but for the fundamental values, the time-honored merchants, the shoe companies ... the universal Coca-Colas.... He judges them not according to the 'season' but by the sound principles and aphorism that his father or grandfather or Ben Graham [his mentor] might have recognized. Buffett has not always lived up to his heroes. He is only human, and he certainly has strayed. But he has been faithful enough to his bygone idols to rouse a memory of their more simple, more certain world.

Joseph Nocera is a contributing editor of Fortune *and* The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is "sweet" an odd choice of words to use in connection with what is, after all, a biography of an investor? Perhaps it is; but I can't think of a better way to describe this book. Lowenstein is one of a handful of genuinely fine writers who work at *The Wall Street Journal* and the prose he displays here is an admirable mixture of the clear-eyed and the poetic. The book is both empathetic and intelligent, without ever slopping over into fawning.

All the great Buffett triumphs are here: his decision to invest in such bedrocks of his portfolio as GEICO, the insurance company, *The Washington Post*, and Coca-Cola. Lowenstein also details the occasional Buffett misstep, such as his decision in the early seventies to invest money in an obscure new magazine called *The Washington Monthly*—an investment that may earn him a few chits when he meets his maker, but one that stubbornly refuses to yield him an earthly return.

Buffett has never seemed interested in what his money could do, either for himself or for others. "The money was the *proof*," Lowenstein writes, "a scorecard for his favorite game."

Lowenstein is equally good at delineating Buffett's character, piercing the patina of humility to reveal a man who needs to be at the center of any orbit he's in, and looking past Buffett's outward friendliness and finding a father who has largely ignored the emotional needs of his own children. Even his refusal to loan his kids money when they're in need strikes one as a bit ... much. Always, though, Lowenstein bursts these balloons gently, never failing to remind us of the quality of decency that is at Buffett's core.

Yet hanging over this entire enterprise—by which I mean not only Lowenstein's book, but also Buffett's career—is a central question which remains unanswered, and is perhaps unanswerable. The question is: *why?*

As Lowenstein describes it, even as a child Buffett had a deep-seated need to make money—and then to see that money grow through the miracle of investing and compounding. As a young man working under the legendary "value" investor Ben Graham, Buffett loved ferreting out overlooked companies whose stock prices did not reflect the inherent value Buffett could see in them. Even then, though, he didn't seem much interested in what his money could do, either for himself or for others. "The money was a *proof*," Lowenstein writes, "a scorecard for his favorite game."

To read this biography is to realize that Buffett never outgrew that child-like desire to continue "piling and heaping"—to borrow the apt phrase of his friend Ann Landers—even after he had bigger piles than everyone else. "Money," adds Lowenstein, "was the pivotal motivator of his life." As a result, he has been perfectly willing to own RJR Nabisco junk bonds (and also R.J. Reynolds stock, before he began to get queasy about cigarettes), and to drive the number two newspaper in Buffalo out of business.

Indeed, the newspaper business is to Buffett merely a means to make more money; whatever larger purpose it might have is incidental to that central one. When the journalists who had slaved on his behalf during the Buffalo newspaper battle asked him afterwards for a share of the rewards, he said no. "There is nothing anybody on the third floor [the newsroom] can do that affects profits," he told them flatly. Buffett's legendary decency has not necessarily trickled down to the hired help.

Even as he approaches senior citizen status (he's 65), Buffett seems loath to reduce his piles of money. He is adamantly opposed to passing on his fortune to his children—certainly a defensible view. But he also seems unwilling to put his fortune to charitable uses in any significant way (the sole exception is population control), or to try to use it to do anything beyond compounding. The piles just keep growing, as does the praise Buffett gets for his investing acumen and his down-to-earth approach. The message that never seems to come through to Buffett is that you can't take it with you.

So yes, give him his due, as Lowenstein certainly does. Warren Buffett will undoubtedly go down in history as the greatest investor of all time. The tragedy of Warren Buffett, though, is that's all he seems destined to be. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political Booknotes

America First!: Its History, Culture, And Politics
Bill Kauffman
Prometheus Books, $25.95
By Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

In the great debate of 1940-41 about whether to enter World War II, the America First Committee was, of course, the bastion of isolationism. I must declare an interest: I was on the interventionist side in that debate. In later times, however, I have not been without sympathy for neo-isolationist positions. Though Bill Kauffman lists "the Schlesingers, the Achesons, and the Rusks" as the miscreants who have tried "to entangle us in wars that Middle America does not want," I was in fact opposed to the Vietnam and Gulf Wars and to the assaults on Nicaragua, Grenada, and Panama. Indeed, Max Ascoli denounced me 40 years ago as an isolationist in his magazine, *The Reporter*. So I approached this book in a mood of curiosity rather than of condemnation. I wondered how the debate of 1940-41 might look after half a century of America's excesses and failures in the role of world savior.

But *America First!* is neither systematic history nor analytical political science. It is rather a meditation on American isolationism and populism in the interests of constructing a genealogy and a usable past for a nationalist revival today. The real purpose of *America First!* is not to explain the past, but to rally forces for the future.

Accordingly, Kauffman gives an exceedingly sketchy account of the origins of the America First Committee, vastly inflating the importance (in this connection) of Hamlin Garland and Amos Pinchot and not even mentioning R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., and General Robert E. Wood, the committee's moving spirits. Anyone interested in the history of the America First Committee must turn to the introduction of *In Danger Undaunted*, a selection of the Committee's papers edited by our premier student of American isolationism, Justus Doenecke.

Kauffman is not concerned with defining the issues in the debate of 1940-41. The dividing line did not run, as he sometimes implies, between hard-headed, national-interest advocates and mushy would-be world saviors. It ran between those who believed that the national interest of the United States required action to prevent Hitler from taking over Europe and those who believed that the United States could live at peace with a Nazi Europe. But Kauffman eschews questions of national security and geopolitics. He does quote isolationist prophecies of disaster in that period—intervention will "impose a dictatorship and turn us into a totalitarian state," said Oswald Garrison Villard; "no longer will this be a free land," said Burton K. Wheeler—but does not pause to reflect that these horrible things did not come to pass.

Kauffman is an engaging and often amusing writer. He believes in localism, decentralization, and a minimalist state pursuing a neutral foreign policy. His text suggests that, if he could do American history over again, he would reject the Constitution and stick with the Articles of Confederation, let the South secede in 1861, and stay out of all wars, except the War for Independence and maybe the Mexican War.

America went wrong, in his view, when Lincoln crushed "the localist Confederate rebellion," and it went further astray when Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt took charge in the twentieth century: "Our pious canting imperialism, the favoring of big over small business, the bloating of the executive branch, the centralization of power in Washington, permanent involvement in the affairs of Europe, conscription, confiscatory taxation—the cousins Roosevelt hammered gilt nails in our collective coffin."

However, salvation at last may be at hand. NAFTA, Kauffman argues, provides the opportunity to reorganize American politics, replacing the increasingly irrelevant Democratic/Republican, liberal/conservative division with a globalist/nationalist division. He calls for an America First coalition based on "the bohemian right, patriotic left, and angry center"—the coalition that came together in the late thirties "to oppose the fascist thrust of the later New Deal" but was stamped out by World War II. The leaders of this nationalist resurgence, Kauffman tells us, are Ross Perot, Pat Buchanan, Jerry Brown, and Gore Vidal.

Kauffman, one surmises, is of the libertarian, Cato Institute wing of the conservative movement. He has no use for Joe McCarthy, Norman Podhoretz, or William Bennett ("a virtual fascist") and not much for Barry Goldwater ("squarely behind the empire"), Ronald Reagan ("America First is diametrically opposed to Reaganism"), or Richard Nixon ("the age's chief internationalist"). He accuses the Heritage Foundation of having "unfathomably deep South Korean ties" and writes darkly of "the typewriter hawks and blow-dried Republicans of Washington, D.C.," and "the grant-grazing conservative herd ... rife with closeted gay men who sing the praises of Republican 'family values' by day and cruise for boy prostitutes by night."

Such internecine polemics suggest that factional strife may be even more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a problem for the right than for the left. Even within Kauffman's nationalist band of brothers, it is hard to imagine Ross, Pat, Jerry, and Gore in harmonious alliance. This should offer liberals a measure of consolation in the turbulent times ahead.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. is the winner of Pulitzer Prizes in history and biography.

Trust

Francis Fukuyama
Free Press, $25

By Jonathan Rowe

I was talking recently with a friend who had just left his job at a West Coast bank for a higher-paying job at another. It was the fifth time he had done this, and I asked him if the constant job-hopping was something he regretted. He did at first, he said. But the banks soon disabused him of such notions. "You put in your effort, you try to show loyalty," he said. "Then they sell the bank or they merge, and everything you've done, all your effort, it doesn't count for anything. They can dump you tomorrow. What I learned is, you've got to look out for yourself."

This atmosphere poisons much of the American economy today, from Silicon Valley to pro sports. In the corporate world, mergers and leveraged buy-outs have everyone looking over their shoulders. It is likely that the employees of Chemical and Chase banks in New York have their minds on more than banking these days, as the triage begins after the big merger.

It was with such thoughts in mind that I started Francis Fukuyama's new book, *Trust*. The theme is both fertile and timely. An economy is much more than an arrangement of monetary incentives and rewards, Fukuyama reminds us. It is part of a larger culture, from which it ultimately draws its character and strength. For all the Republicans' obsessive harping upon their policy prescriptions—tax incentives and deregulation—Fukuyama shows implicitly that there's much more to prosperity than rebuilding the temple of Money and Gain. You can get the tax incentives "right," let the profit-seekers turn every forest into a shopping mall and every river into a sewer. But if the social structure is falling apart in the process, the economy eventually will flounder anyway.

Regrettably, however, Fukuyama continually pulls back from the broad implications of his premise. Early on, he invokes Max Weber's refutation of Marx: Culture can determine economics, as well as vice versa. The influence clearly goes both ways, especially in America, where the economy has virtually become the culture. Not coming to terms with this, Fukuyama has written half of what could have been a truly important book. He has explored incisively how America's crumbling social structure could bring about economic decline. But he does not pursue with any vigor the role of the economy in hastening that social disintegration—and hence in the destruction of itself.

The social trait Fukuyama focuses on is what he calls "spontaneous sociability," the ability of people to deal with one another without the efficiency-reducing friction of lawyers, regulators, bureaucracies, and police. This quality begins in families and civic society, but permeates economic institutions as well. It defines, Fukuyama says, the difference between groups and economies that prosper and those that don't, though in ways that vary greatly from culture to culture.

What is remarkable, he observes, is that conventional economics ignores this seemingly obvious fact. The "neoclassical synthesis" of Alfred Marshall and his disciples is the starting point of libertarian policy belief and dominates the American economic debate today. It is economics posing as physics—Adam Smith stripped of his irony, salty wisdom, and awareness of history and culture. Neoclassical economics reduces people to isolated integers of acquisition that relate only in diads, seeking always to drive the best bargain, to "maximize their utility" in an entirely rational and self-interested way.

In this hypothetical model, economic "policy" becomes noxious by definition. The very concept of "society" becomes extraneous at best; and the word "history" rarely enters, except as the sad chronicle of left-liberal folly in presuming to intervene in the divine mechanics of the market. In his sane and temperate fashion, Fukuyama puts this view to rest. "It is an act of considerable intellectual hubris," he writes, "to believe that only economic goals in the narrow sense can be considered rational."

The problem is that Fukuyama doesn't seem to trust his own insight enough to follow it to where it fairly begs to go: to ask how a consumption ethos fostered by the libertarian model can undermine the very social and cultural virtues he posits as essential. Instructively, he analyzes U.S. culture through the dual tendencies of its Protestant heritage—the individualist striving on the one hand, and the voluntary communalism on the other. An epitome is the Mormon Church, which combines the aggressive entrepreneurial spirit of its members with an organization that functions as a kind of voluntary, enlightened welfare state: tithing members, expecting two years of missionary work from them, maintaining broad welfare programs for the needy, and even a system of socialized water rights in the parched Utah desert.

This aspect of America fascinates Fukuyama. What disrupted this communalism, he argues, are two familiar villains. First, the New Deal social legislation and its Great Society progeny, which displaced voluntary sharing with the bureaucratized substitutes of the state. And second, the broad expansion of individual rights that has proceeded since the sixties, replacing informal and voluntary modes of social cohesion with a legalistic regime of associational entitlements, mediated by lawyers.

I don't disagree with either of these points, as far as they go. It would have been useful, however, if Fukuyama had talked about property rights as well as individual ones. Those property owners

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

who want monetary compensation when the public restricts their use of property in any way for the common good—they aren't doing much for the bonds of social cohesion and trust either. "What is particularly insidious about the American culture of Rights," he says, "is that it dignifies with high moral purpose what often amount to low private interests or desires." Exactly.

Instead, Fukuyama keeps steering back to safe, neoconservative policy nostrums—even as he's planting depth charges in their economic foundations. He ends up with the shoulder-shrugging, Kristolesque conclusion that government should simply lay off and "do no harm." But his argument raises a host of issues, from the scale and structure of corporations to the design of cities and towns to the way the new communications Superhighway is configured and how access to it is determined. If the goal is spontaneous sociability and social cohesion, then we need to ask how particular economic policies and market arrangements affect those qualities for good or ill. For example, if corporate mergers and takeovers tend to undermine the cohesion of corporations and communities, perhaps that should be weighed against the supposed "efficiencies" that result. Perhaps the United States should follow Japan, and discourage such disruptions in its large corporate infrastructure.

Or take our patterns of development, which government policy has affected mightily through the highway program and many others. Traditional Main Streets are much more conducive to spontaneous sociability than are humongous regional shopping malls. Perhaps Vermont is right in trying to keep out the Wal-Marts and protect the small-town culture. Maybe the family farm and small-town cafe have a social and economic function that the economists have overlooked. Anyone who has taken a train through Europe has probably noticed the spontaneous sociability that can arise when people are together in ways that are rare in America's automotive culture. Perhaps trains and mass transit have virtues that conservatives should reconsider. The list goes on and on.

I don't want to sell Fukuyama short. His argument is intelligent, and informed by a wide range of historical and cultural examples. His prose is crystal-clear and almost clinical in its fair-mindedness and dispassion. We have become so accustomed to the tinhorn issue-mongering of a Newt Gingrich or a Dick Armey on these subjects that it is an absolute pleasure to read someone you can disagree with without feeling a polemical knee to your groin. And in a way, I'm glad Fukuyama doesn't take his theme all the way up the hill. By holding back on the implications, Fukuyama has managed to slip past the radar of the ideological Right (an excerpt appeared in a recent issue of *The National Review).* Coming as it does from inside the conservative camp, it may ultimately present more of a challenge to the GOP's Newtonian economics than the Democrats ever could.

Jonathan Rowe is a contributing editor to The Washington Monthly.

Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality

Andrew Sullivan

Alfred A. Knopf, $22

By Chandler Burr

Virtually Normal is a meticulously argued, precisely written book about a thorny political problem: the role of homosexuals and homosexuality in American society. It is an attempt, to quote its author, "to think through the arguments on all sides as carefully and honestly as possible; to take the unalterable experience of all of us, heterosexual and homosexual, and try to make some social and political sense of it."

To take Andrew Sullivan's last chapters on the politics of homosexuality first, he argues that homosexuals do not pose a moral or political threat to the country. But his strategy for breaking down the barriers gays face in this country combines a liberal ideology with a deep respect for traditional institutions. What emerges from this hybrid is a most practical prescription for better integrating the gay community into the society at large.

While the liberals have their hearts in the right place, Sullivan argues, their obsession with anti-discrimination laws has set up more obstacles than it has torn down. Gays have become a "special interest," and homosexual rights organizations are beginning to show some of the negative characteristics inherent to that status. "The liberal," Sullivan writes, "should be wary of identifying his or her tradition with a particular ... cause; for, in that process, the whole potential of liberalism's appeal is lost." How much of the micromanaged civil rights legislative agenda, the author asks, is actually necessary for gays, particularly as gays "do not even have to seek, as blacks did before them, the right to be integrated into the military; they are already integrated. They are simply not recognized."

True liberalism, Sullivan argues, would call simply for an end to state discrimination, specifically the bans on military service and marriage. It is this respect for traditionally conservative institutions that gives Sullivan's liberalism its strength. Being prohibited from these two pillars of American culture has marginalized the gay community, Sullivan points out. They do not lead "normal lives" for any reason other than that they are not allowed to lead them by law. The familiar stereotype that gays are promiscuous and immoral, for instance, would not stand if the country regularly saw homosexual marriages. Gays would not be perceived as subverting American values if they were seen in the military fighting and dying for those values.

Writing an intellectual book about a controversial topic in an engaging style is no small feat. As a political scientist (he received his Ph.D. from Harvard), Sullivan is obviously comfortable writing about theory. As a journalist (he's been the editor of *The New Republic* for four years), he makes his points clearly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And as a homosexual, he brings an intimacy to his topic that few books of equal intellectual ambition have. Sullivan addresses his subject in the context of familiar, dining-room-table arguments. Beginning with a personal experience from his school days in Great Britain, Sullivan writes:

> "I was circumcised, unlike many other English boys: had that done it?... When I was a little late going through puberty, I wondered whether that might be related and half imagined that my voice might not break, and reveal my difference. Eventually, I succumbed to panic and mentioned it before God. I was in the communion line at ... Our Lady and Saint Peter's.... Please, I remember asking of the Almighty almost offhandedly ... please, help me with *that*."

To deal with "that" in his book, Sullivan divides the way different camps regard homosexuality into four categories. He terms them liberalism, conservatism, prohibitionism, and liberation, although he defines these labels in his own particular way. "And," adds Sullivan forthrightly, "each of them, I hope to argue, is wrong."

That is Sullivan's conclusion. Most of the book, however, concerns the arguments of others. The book's section on conservative attitudes toward gays is especially relevant given the current political climate. Sullivan's "conservatives" are those who support the liberal state's principles of liberty and free speech but who, believing that society needs to affirm certain moral values, would prefer to keep homosexuals in a distinct political "second tier."

Bob Dole and his GOP colleagues are trying at once to gain support from the religious right and not alienate the rest of the country; they want to strike a balance. Sullivan argues by analogy they cannot: Discrimination against Jews was justified by the threat their difference posed to social cohesion. The political antagonism toward homosexuals should be seen no differently. Sullivan skewers the conservatives with a quote from Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1833 speech supporting full political equality for Jews in England, in which Macaulay points out that his opponent in the debate tried for an impossible compromise by promoting a limited equality. "'He goes a certain way in intolerance. Then he stops ... I know the reason. It is his humanity. Those who formerly dragged the Jew at a horse's tail ... were much worse men than my honorable friend; but they were more consistent than he.'" The same tension within conservative ideology ensures limited equality will not stand.

The more consistent yet less humane cousins of the conservatives are those whom Sullivan terms "prohibitionists," who include the Catholic hierarchy and most Christian fundamentalists. "In the prohibitionist case," Sullivan begins, "the argument goes something like this: Homosexuality is a choice." People are naturally heterosexual but somewhere along the line fall into sin. Homosexual behavior is simply something that people "do," as they might "do" other things, like play tennis or rob banks. But Sullivan points out that prohibitionists run up against "what seems to be an unavoidable problem: Not all human beings seem to be naturally heterosexual." Whether homosexuality is genetically or environmentally determined, it is clearly not the choice prohibitionists think it to be. The prohibitionist dream that homosexuality will simply disappear if they ignore or suppress it is, therefore, fatally flawed.

The "liberationists"—extreme-left liberals and social constructionists such as the academic Lillian Faderman—share the prohibitionists' view of homosexuality: It doesn't exist. Whereas the prohibitionists argue that everyone is heterosexual, the liberationists claim that all people are naturally pansexual, but that society pushes individuals to identify themselves as being of a certain sexual orientation. People can commit homosexual acts, but no one is inherently homosexual. In this way, Sullivan argues, liberationists run into the same problem as the fundamentalist Christians: the real world. As hard-core liberals for whom environment molds everything, liberationists want to see all aspects of human existence as "constructions" of omnipotent social forces; homosexuality is just one manifestation. But this world view vastly oversimplifies the realities of sexual orientation and Sullivan dismisses them as a hyper-intellectual, politically irrelevant force, "which seeks only to show and persuade ... as successful as its latest theatrical escapades."

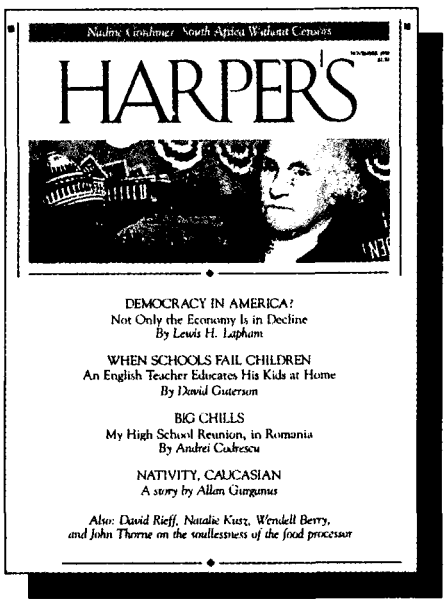
There is one glaring misstep: an incoherent diatribe against outing, which not only has nothing to do with anything else in the book, it illogically cuts against Sullivan's point where it would work in his favor if allowed: Outing by its nature contradicts the liberationist idea that homosexuality does not exist. Otherwise, Sullivan manages viscerally effective points. In support of gay marriages, for example, Sullivan writes, "Any heterosexual man, who takes a few moments to consider what his life would be like if he were never allowed a formal institution to cement his relationship will see the truth of what I am saying. Imagine life without a recognized family; imagine dating without even the possibility of marriage."

The point of *Virtually Normal* is made with admirable concision throughout, and notably in the title of the epilogue, "What Are Homosexuals For?" Sullivan answers: Homosexuality is a variant of human sexual orientation—nothing more, nothing less. This is a conclusion strongly conservative in its practical view of social institutions and their importance, yet clear-mindedly liberal in its ability to view homosexuality without hysteria, exaggeration, or zealotry, but as a fact of life. Given the extremes at war on this issue, such a book is a welcome achievement.

Chandler Burr is writing a book about biological research on sexual orientation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's not homework.



Just because a magazine is intelligent and challenging doesn't mean reading it has to be hard work.

On one side, there are the general media magazines filled with the usual hype. They spoon-feed their readers the same old easy-to-digest mush. And on the other side are the stodgy, long-winded intellectual magazines. You can find some good reading in them – if you have the time and energy to search for it.

Then there's Harper's Magazine. Smart, but always concise and to the point. Every issue is loaded with gems of thought, opinion, wit and humor. Harper's is a pleasure to read. But that makes it no less serious. You'll find articles, essays, letters and fiction that consistently challenge conventional perceptions.

Harper's presents facts objectively, allowing you to draw your own conclusions. And speaking of facts, how about "Harper's Index"? It's a statistical tapestry, a minefield of unpredictable information. Try to stop reading it once you've started. You can't.

Harper's Magazine is original and inspiring. It's truly exceptional.

And right now you can take advantage of a special introductory deal; a full year of Harper's Magazine–12 issues–for *only $12*. That's 66% off the regular newsstand price. Not only that, it's risk-free, because if at any time during your subscription you're not completely satisfied, you can simply cancel for a full refund on all unmailed copies.

Fill out and mail the attached postage-paid card. And get ready – soon you'll be enjoying your first issue of Harper's.

☐ Yes, please send me Harper's at the special introductory rate of 12 issues for $12.

☐ I prefer two years (24 issues) for $22.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

☐ Bill me later. ☐ Payment enclosed.

Mail to: Harper's Subscription Department, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

Please allow 6-8 weeks for your first issue. Canada $21 (CDN funds), includes postage. All other countries $38 (U.S. dollars only), includes special delivery.

HZ151

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why Workers Don't Join Unions.

(The **Real** Reason)

Nearly five years ago, a majority of workers at the Be-Lo supermarket chain in the Tidewater area of Virginia signed cards expressing their desire to join our union. But their dreams were shattered. Through firings, fear and intimidation, Be-Lo management decimated union support and made a farce of the March 21, 1991 representation election.

The National Labor Relations Board conducted a thorough investigation. After more than 200 witnesses and 57 days of hearings, an Administrative Law Judge ruled that Be-Lo's illegal actions were so numerous and pervasive that "a fair rerun election is not possible—the interests of justice cry out for a bargaining order."

That cry for justice has yet to be answered.

In July of this year, a Labor Board panel of two Republicans and one Democrat affirmed the bargaining order. But Be-Lo workers still don't have a union.

Much is written about "the decline of unions", and most of it is nonsense. Unfair employers like Be-Lo use every illegal tactic to deny workers the collective bargaining power they desperately need. Now the Republican-controlled Congress wants to cut the budget of the already overburdened NLRB to make resolution of unfair labor practices drag on even longer.

Justice delayed is justice denied, and for Be-Lo workers it has been four years, seven months, and counting. Any reporter looking for the **real** story why unions today represent only one in eight workers (the decline of unions and decline of American living standards go hand in hand), can find the answer in Tidewater. Or give us a call at 1-800/638-0800.

Thomas R. McNutt
President

C. James Lowthers
Secretary-Treasurer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED